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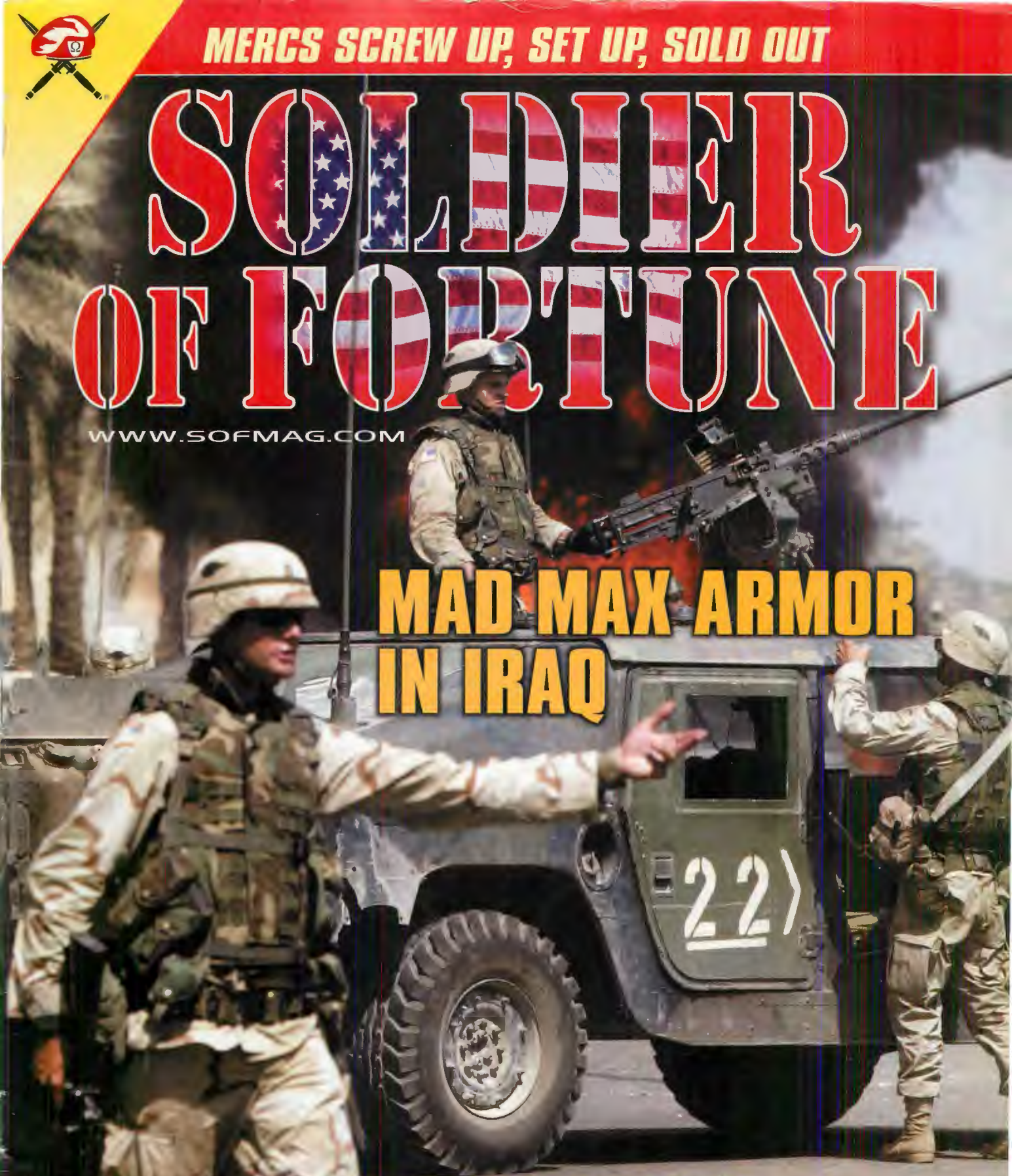

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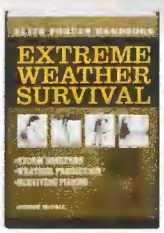

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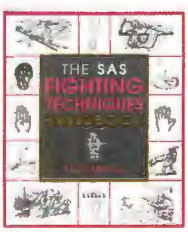

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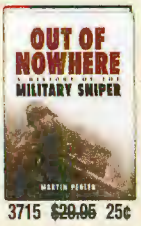

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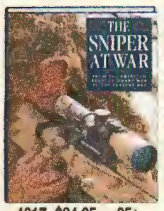

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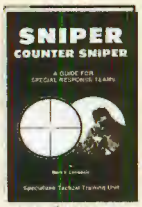

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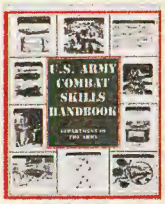

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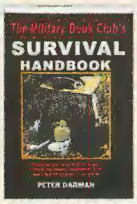

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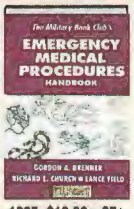

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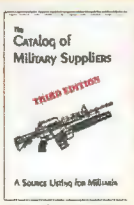

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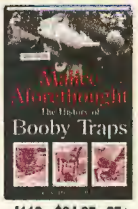

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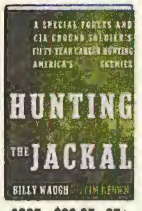

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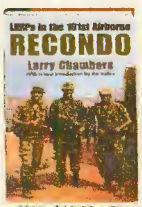

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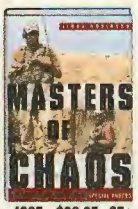

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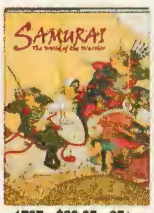

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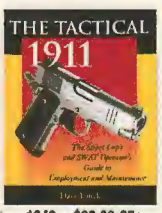

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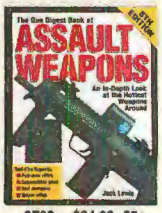

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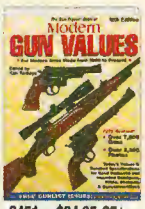

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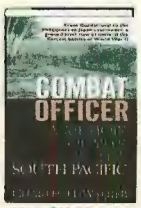

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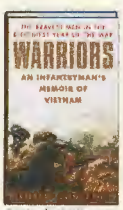

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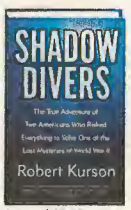

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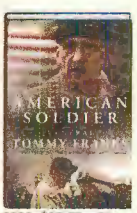

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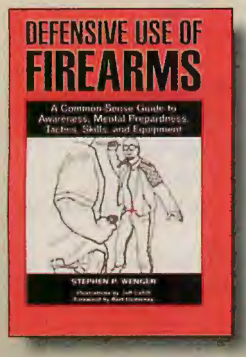
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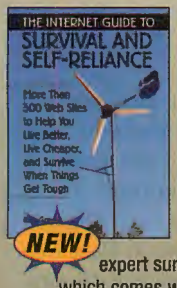
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by Rich Gray

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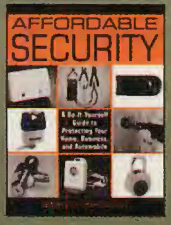

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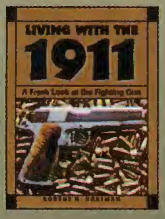

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COMMAND GUIDANCE

ROBERT K. BROWN

Another Dunce Cap For Brady Campaign

You know the anti-gunners are desperate when they have to resort to nonsense like this. Even though violent crime has declined 12 straight years and is at a 27-year low, the Brady Campaign says that 31 states deserve a "D" or "F" grade for their gun laws. This, according to their eighth annual "report card."

If that isn't silly enough, on the January 12 episode of NRA's live talk-radio show, NRANEWS.com, Brady spokesman Peter Hamm claimed Brady's grades are determined by a "secret" formula. There's no secret, though. Plain and simple, Brady gives the highest grades to the states that have the most "gun control." So, for example, the state of Maryland gets the highest grade (A-), even though it has the nation's second highest murder rate and highest robbery rate. But low-crime states with fewer restrictions on the rights of lawful gun owners, like Idaho, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Vermont get a "D" or "F."

If anyone deserves a bad grade, the Brady Campaign does for failing "Civics 101." It reduced Ohio's grade from a "D+" to a "D-" because the state's Right-to-Carry law "forced police to issue CCW" permits! Well of course they did; That's called "democracy." Legislatures, representing the people, pass laws. That's what they do!

The Brady Campaign also gets an "F" for failing math, claiming that "gun control" reduces crime. As noted in numerous studies, including recent ones from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and National Research Council, there is no evidence to support that claim.

Basically, the Brady Campaign's "report card" is a superficial publicity stunt, perpetrated by an extremist anti-gun organization trying to attract attention to itself because it is fast on its way to becoming irrelevant. Name the issue, and the Brady Campaign is either losing the battle, or has lost the war. To wit: The right to keep and bear arms is now widely recognized as an individual right. The federal "assault weapons" ban expired. The federal waiting period expired in favor of Instant Check. And NRA-PVF-supported candidates were even more successful than usual in the recent elections, while virtually all Brady-supported candidates for national office were defeated.

While sitting in the corner, the folks at the Brady Campaign would do well to read the writing on the wall.

The above was extracted from the NRA-ILA Alert *Vol. 12, No. 2. Save your guns. Join the NRA.*

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CARE Packages for the Troops

What follows is a long, but thoroughly delightful letter about the travails of sending CARE packages to the troops. We have reprinted it in its entirety, as it illustrates several important points — not the least of which is that when you love our troops you will put up with the bureaucratic hassles and prevail. And maybe that not all heroes are in uniform.

My husband is an avid reader of your fine periodical. He came across the letter written by MSgt Earl Mitchell referencing a "Short List" of items a GI loves to receive from the States. Both Mike and I are disabled and not rich in money, but we are rich in compassion, so we put together a package of some of the things on Sergeant Mitchell's list. The box was rather large, so in the middle of a Cleveland snow storm we drove to a UPS store to send it off and hopefully save on the postage. It went like this:

Me: I would like to send this package to Iraq, please.

Clerk: Ma'am that is an APO address and UPS cannot deliver to an APO address.

M: Well, then how can I get it there?

C: We are also a post office, you can send it that way.

M: Great! I thought I was going to have to carry this back to the car and into the post office.

C: No ma'am we can do that. It's going to be about $48.

M: $48! But you said it is not going to Iraq, it is going to an APO in California.

C: Yes, but then they forward it to Iraq. So, you are really sending it to Iraq.

M: No, I would be sending it to California.

C: Ma'am do you know any other address for this person?

M: No, I don't even know him.

C: Well, you can't send a package overseas addressed to "any soldier," you have to know him.

M: Okay, I know OF him, I do not KNOW him, and what difference would that make anyway? I just want to send some things to a soldier. I don't know if he is really in Iraq OR California.

C: Well, it would still be $48.

M: Okay, let's get going, my husband is waiting in the car.

C: Here is the form you have to fill out. (He hands me an 8X10 form in triplicate, where I proceed to copy my name, address and phone and MSgt. Mitchell's name and address into tiny boxes. Where it asks the contents I write, "gift," sign it and hand it back to him.

C: Ma'am, have you ever done one of these forms before?

M: Yes. Unless they have changed in the past two months.

C: Well, you have to list what is IN the box, not just gift. (He hands the form back. I write what I can remember I put in the box in the boxes and hand it back.)

C: Ma'am you have to write the QUANTITY of each item.

M: You have GOT to be kidding!

C: No ma'am, we need to know just how many of each item — not just socks, razors and knives.

M: Okay, gimme it back. Now, just to be sure we do not have a problem, there were two PACKS of socks that I unpackaged to use to cushion other things. So, do I write two packages, 12 pair, or 24 SOCKS?

C: I think you can write 12 pair. (I fudge it on the razors, soap etc.)

C: Okay, now I have some questions. Are there any dried meat products in the package?

M: HUH?

C: You know, like beef jerky, Slim Jims?

M: No. But may I ask what is the difference? That is what the soldiers ask for specifically.

C: I don't know. It is in the rule book.

(A man next to me affirms that one cannot sent dried meat products — he has a son in Iraq)

M: Seems kind of dumb. I mean, why are we worrying about sending dried meat to Iraq when they just blew up a mess tent?

C: I did not know that.

M: Never mind

C: Now, is there any fruit in the box?

M: What kind of fruit?

C: Real fruit.

M: As opposed to fake fruit?

C: Ma'am, you can't have fresh or dried fruit.

M: The soldiers ask for power bars and fruit roll-ups...

C: No fruit. Any vegetables?

M: Sir. There is NO FOOD of any kind. Holy cow, I know Bin Laden has the market cornered on poppies but I did not realize he had the Slim Jim market cornered too....

C: Okay, is there anything hazardous?

M: Well, there are 5 knives of different kinds. My husband used to be a policeman so he sent some knives on chains....

C: Knives are not hazardous.

M: WHAT!!! I can't send beef jerky but I can send knives? What if an Iraqi got ahold of the knives? That would be more dangerous than beef jerky!!!

C: Do you want to take the knives out of the box, ma'am?

M: Hell no! I'd like to send more now...

C: Anything liquid (I did not mention the shampoo) or explosive?

M: There are 2 soccer balls in there for the kids. I let some of the air out in case they were sent by plane and unless you consider them explosive, yes.

C: No ma'am. They will go by boat.

M: Boat? For $48 they should go by Concorde!

C: Okay, now look at the highlighted paragraph on this page and copy it exactly into this box on the form.

M: I swear that the contents of this box are to be used by a member of the armed forces and only by the armed forces or their immediate family ... You mean I have to write ALL of this?

C: Yes ma'am.

M: Why can't it just be printed there?

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C: Because then we would need a special form.
M: Okay. (5 minutes pass and I am finally done writing)
C: Okay, now sign here and here and here. That will be $48 ...

So, MSgt Mitchell, your package is on the way. I hope it finds you because there was another box I had to mark indicating that if undeliverable; should the box be treated as abandoned, or returned at my expense. I marked abandoned and when he was not looking wrote, "or any other soldier under his command" under your APO address.

People here DO care. We would send things all the time. Maybe if the post office got a clue.....

Michael and Carly Creech
Fairport Harbor, Ohio

The lessons here are self-evident. And to them we would add: you can save time in the post office if you go get the needed forms ahead of time; If you don't have a particular favorite GI to send to, contact your local VFW or American Legion post as they will have the names and address of GIs who will still be there when your CARE package arrives (MSgt Earl Mitchell, for instance, has rotated). And if you want to help out a tightly run ship that has all the rules and regs down pat, go to www.iodelivers.org . "Operation Interdependence" was put together by retired Leatherneck Albert Renteria, and last year alone delivered some 500,000 parcels to the troops, and in a manner that does not overload the military mail system. Check 'em out. And the USO has a program "Operation USO CARE Package" that is particularly good if you are a corporation that wants to donate comfort goods to the troops: Go to **www.usometrodc.org/care.html** .

Militec? You Bet!

Please add to the list of items that our GIs want in Iraq, Militec. It's an excellent lube that does not collect dust, many of our troops are sending home requesting this product. Check it out! They even have free samples. I tried them and they are great. The actions on my weapons work much smoother and once cured properly the lube is dry.

Wm. Foulkes
Viet Vet, SSG

Right on, Bill. Militec is not just the Good Stuff, in the Sandbox it's a lifesaver. And the company is as good as it gets when it comes to supporting our troops. They even have a program to send free samples to deployed GIs at their APO/FPO address. Go to www.militec-1.com for more details. And keep some on hand, to put in your CARE packages, and for your own shootin' irons.

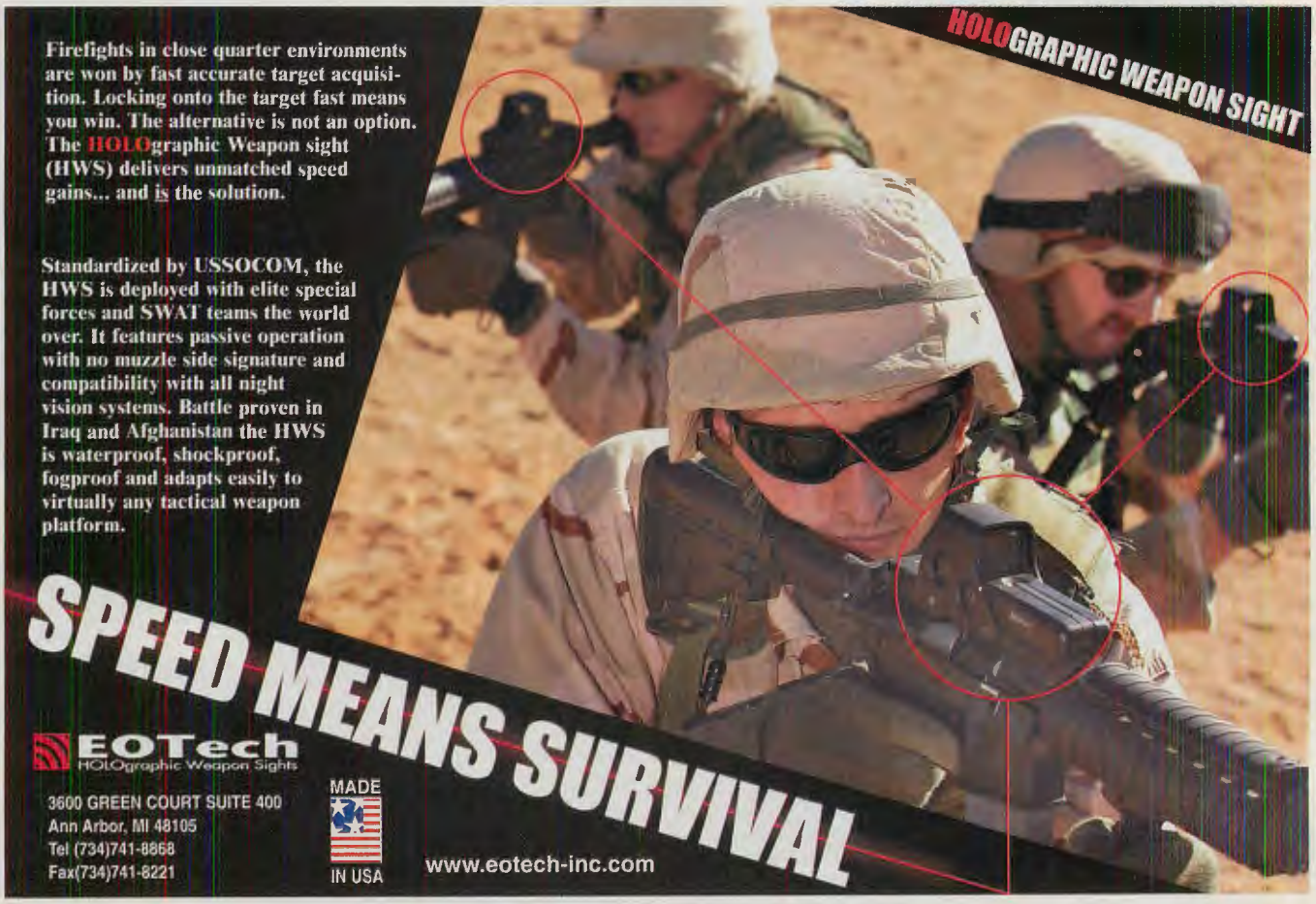
Thanks for the Forward...

Just got this letter in email from one of my guys in my latest book "Crosshairs on the Kill Zone," Roy Lafon. Roy was a Marine sniper in Vietnam. The letter is from GySgt David Rodriguez for the 1/3 Scout Sniper Platoon in Iraq. Lafon and his civilian company sent a large package of goodies over and this is the response.

— Craig Roberts

Dear Mr. Lafon and all who helped support our Scout

Continued on page 78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BULLETIN BOARD

RKB's Recommendation For The NRA Board Of Directors' Election

Every year, I recommend one or more individuals for election to the NRA Board of Directors. Though there are many qualified individuals running, I am supporting only the reelection of John Cushman as I strongly feel his presence on the Board is highly desirable, both because of his long and effective record of supporting the Second Amendment and the fact that he serves with me on the Military & Veterans' Affairs Committee. We should not hold it against him that he is a former Marine. By only voting for John, you will increase his chances of being elected. Some do not like the fact that I sometimes endorse the concept of "bullet balloting." Screw 'em. — *Robert K. Brown*

Get On Line

Got a Jarhead in the family? Even if you don't but are one of those who wish they did, check out:
www.marineparents.com

Got a Scotchman in the family? Even if you don't but are one of those who wish they did, and are interested in Brit plans to disband the six Scottish Regiments (including the Black Watch, who just returned from Iraq), go to:
www.savethescottishregiments.co.uk

And for those of us who have served and as a reminder of the sacrifices now made on our behalf, turn on your sound (loud) and go to:
www.coastalwebdesign.com/WeSupportU.htm .

Spiking the .50s?

Complaints from the front indicate that the venerable, reliable and effective .50 is being reined in some quarters, as they are too deadly and destructive, and the collateral damage is too high. So now they cannot shoot the guy firing rockets at them because they aren't allowed to use the weapon that can get them from that far away? May be time to pull some brass up on the front line...

Their Intelligence News:

A joint American, Israeli and Indian nuclear experiment caused the earthquake catastrophe in Southeast Asia, according to an Egyptian weekly newspaper: The nationalist weekly *Al-Usbu* said, "The three most recent tests appeared to be genuine American and Israeli preparations to act together with India to test a way to liquidate humanity," reported the nationalist weekly *Al-Usbu*.

"In the most recent test, they began destroying entire cities over extensive areas. Although the nuclear explosions were carried out in desert lands, tens of thousand of kilometers away from populated areas, they had a direct effect on these Asian areas," according to the weekly. [ed note: if you can find any "desert land" that is "tens of thousands of kilometers from populated areas" you're obviously from a different planet, something we *have* wondered about...]

So far the 2005 Darwin Award for Airfield Maintenance goes to this [purposely unnamed] USAF-operated field in Iraq. Replacing faulty sections of concrete runway is always a good idea, but when the damaged area is dug, it's customary to file a NOTAM (Notice to Airmen). This was not done, so an incoming C-23 Sherpa landing in daylight just landed beyond the hole, and filed a WTFO report, but still no NOTAM was posted and this AFSOC Herky Bird landing at night fell victim. Luckily, no deaths, injuries recoverable, but Herky Bird totaled.

And in Saudi Arabia, a cleric told television viewers that the deaths in the disaster were punishment by Allah against depravity: "The problem is that the (Christian) holidays are accompanied by forbidden things, by immorality, abomination, adulterers, alcohol, drunken dancing and...revelry. A belly dance costs 2,500 (English) pounds per minute and a singer costs 50,000 pounds per hour, and they hop from one hotel to another from night to dawn. Then he spends the entire night defying Allah.

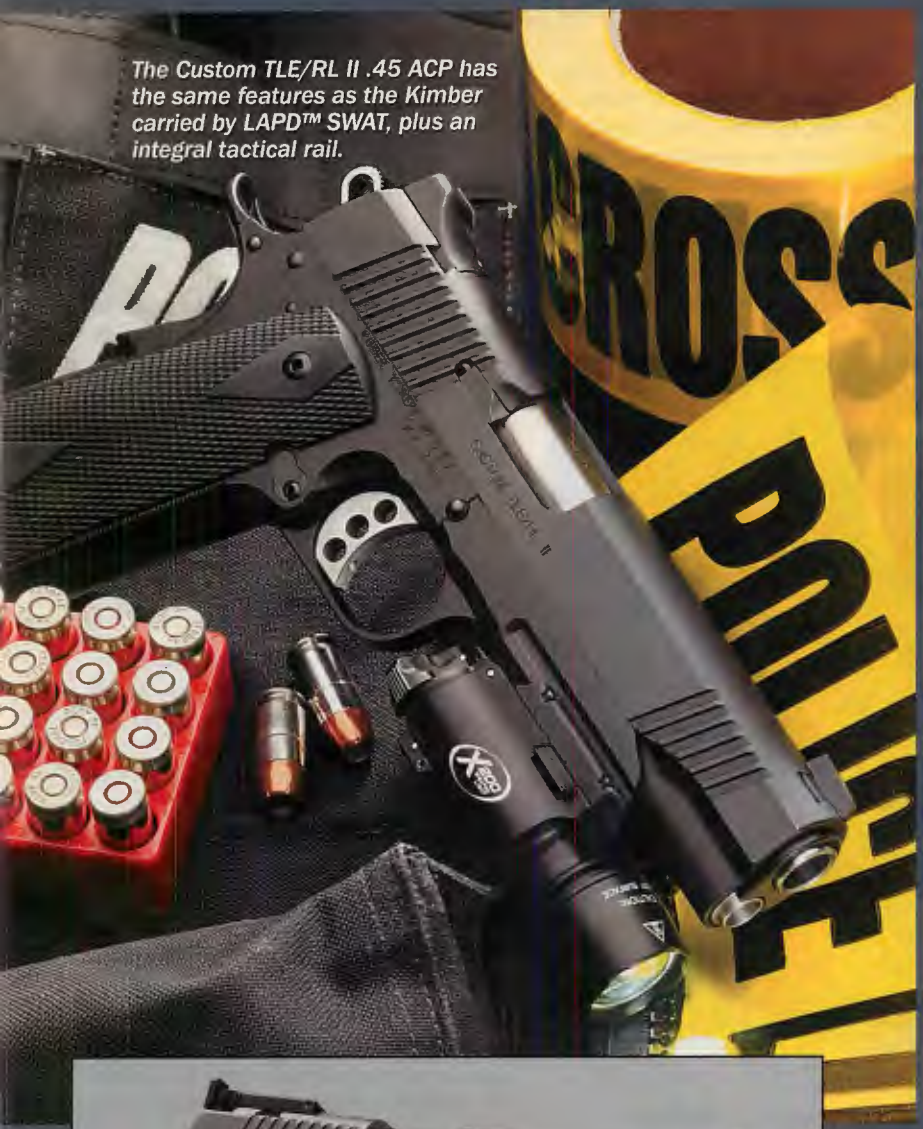
"Haven't they learned their lesson from what Allah wreaked upon the coast of Asia, during the celebration of these forbidden? At the height of immorality, Allah took vengeance on these criminals (and) Allah struck them with an earthquake. He finished off the Richter scale. All nine levels are gone," the cleric sermonized, [conveniently ignoring that the nation worst hit was Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country on earth]...

Our Intelligence News:

A simplified list of the changes enacted under the Intelligence Reorganization bill passed by Congress:

• Establishes minimum standards for birth certificates and driver's licenses and improves security of Social

Kimber. Take a shot in the dark.



Five new Kimber pistols have tactical rails.

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The new Custom TLE/RL™ II is one of five new Kimber pistols with an integral tactical rail for light mounting. Additional features include Meprolight® night sights and 30 LPI front strap checkering from the Kimber Custom Shop. An identical pistol in stainless steel, two Pro Carry models with 4-inch barrels and a full Custom Shop version are now available with a rail. Match grade barrel, chamber and trigger group are standard on all Kimbers.

Like every Kimber pistol, the Custom TLE/RL II is proudly made in America. From LAPD™ SWAT to the toughest Marines in the world, America's best shooters keep choosing Kimber. Join them, and carry the best.

New .22 LR Conversion Kits are $280 and easily install on most 1911s. They are available for purchase through dealers or direct from Kimber.

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• Creates a new position, Director of National Intelligence, who will be the principal adviser to the president and coordinate the nation's spy agencies. The position will be above the CIA director.

• Establishes a National Counterterrorism Center for planning intelligence missions and coordinating information on terror threats and responses.

• Creates a Privacy and Civil Liberties Board of private citizens, with access to all government agencies, to oversee privacy protections.

• Requires a national transportation security strategy, including advanced airline passenger prescreening and biometric identification systems.

• Authorizes money to improve air cargo security and studies of blast-resistant cargo and baggage containers.

• Upgrades security features on pilot licenses.

• Will develop strategies to counter shoulder-fired, Stinger-type portable weapons.

• Provides for tests of advanced sensors, videos and unmanned aircraft to secure northern border and new plans to survey southwest border with unmanned aircraft.

• Requires the Homeland Security Department to quickly implement biometrics screening for those entering and leaving the country.

• Recommends increased diplomacy in the Islamic world to combat spread of terrorism and promote democracy. Maintains financial aid to Pakistan and investment in Afghanistan.

Maryland Report Shatters Gun-Track Myths

A report by the Maryland State Police that recommends repeal of a law requiring collection of ballistic imaging information "shatters one of the

Continued on page 80

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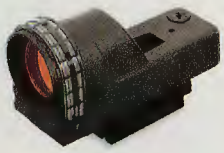

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Tennessee, Kentucky Riflemen Help Prepare GIs For Iraq

BY JANAE DANIELS

Photos courtesy Phil Chockley and Clyde "Rusty" Nail

Over this last Veteran's Day, the patriotism shown for today's military in harms way was extraordinary. It's a time when Americans need to take a minute and be thankful for what they have and remember those who sacrificed their lives for freedom of this great country.

Vietnam veteran and ATA employee Phil Chockley recently spent a week with 28 soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division and was very impressed by the professionalism and excitement expressed by the young men who are preparing to fight for their country.

Mr. Chockley spent 19 months in Vietnam as a Marine using reissued World War II C-rations, ammunition and Korean war-vintage equipment. He was amazed at how technology has helped decrease the casualties of war and advance the art of combat.

"I can only imagine what these soldiers are going through now, like in Fullujah. After you clear a room or building and come outside, you have people in the distance to contend with," he said.

"I would rather be in the jungle. Even though your visibility is low, the visibility for them is the same as it is for you. You have the same advantages and disadvantages."

Mr. Chockley, works in ATA's Civil Engineering Real Property section doing mapping and surveying. Along with two other men from Tennessee, John Chubb and Clyde "Rusty" Nail helped train the 28 soldiers of the 3rd Brigade 101st Airborne Division in advance marksmanship last September.

The three men, along with five others from Kentucky, were contacted by the commander of the Army Marksmanship Unit at Ft. Benning, Ga., Lt. Col. David Liwanig, to provide qualified instructors to participate in

(above) AEDC's Phil Chockley proudly poses with one of his Army students. The student carries on the tradition of his father who served with the 101st Airborne in World War II, jumping into Normandy on D-day.

(left) 101st Airborne Division soldiers on the firing line during training with CMP instructors.

The Army's M4 carbine, which can be fitted with an array of optics, laser target designators and night-vision gear, may be a far cry from the M16 of the Vietnam era – but the principles of precision marksmanship remain the same.

advanced marksmanship training for the soldiers. They are all distinguished competitive high-powered rifle shooters.

"I was impressed by their thirst for knowledge and how much they know about the new warfare technology already," Mr. Chockley said. "I could not be any prouder of these soldiers."

These eight men who volunteered for this task are members of the Tennessee Shooting Sports Association (TSSA), or the Kentucky State Rifle and Pistol Association, which are state-level organizations associated with both the National Rifle Association and the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP).

Mr. Chockley belongs to AEDC's Highland Rim Shooters Club. The base club is affiliated with the TSAA, the NRA and CMP.

The CMP, created by Congress, was originally the Department of Civilian Marksmanship (DCM), formed under the Department of the Army in 1916 to provide a pool of trained civilian marksman that the military could draw from if required. Due to deployments of many of the trainers, the Army is again using that civilian pool of instructors.

Almost 90 percent of the soldiers that these men trained had already been to Afghanistan or Iraq, which made it easier to train because of their experience with warfare and small arms.

"Own the night technology" was the slogan for the week's training due to the many types of advanced night vision, night sights, advanced optical sights and laser sighting systems used during wartime.

"I wished we had these 35 years ago," Mr. Chockley said.

The soldiers used the M4, which is the latest version of the M16 battle rifle first used in Vietnam.

The new weapon is equipped with precision optics, night vision illuminators and lasers only visible on night optical devices.

Several manufacturer's representatives demonstrated their newest versions of this equipment and looked for feedback from the soldiers on the design and future improvements.

"My country has put my troops in the forefront of tech-

Tennessee Shooting Sports Association President Clyde "Rusty" Nail discusses marksmanship techniques with a soldier during the training at Fort Campbell.

nology," Mr. Chockley said. "They have a lot to absorb, but are educated enough to go out and fight professionally with more accuracy."

The soldiers learned how to zero their weapons with iron sights, optical sights and laser sights on a KD (known distance) rifle range at 300 yards. They also worked to improve techniques in sight alignment, trigger and breathing control, methods to utilize sling positions and stabilize themselves as shooting platforms. They learned older techniques like wind calculations, wind drift estimations and holding Kentucky windage.

"We used tenacity to accomplish a mission in Vietnam," Mr. Chockley said. "Today's superbly trained troops use the same tenacity with incredible technology to give them a huge advantage in combat."

President of TSSA, Clyde "Rusty" Nail, feels the men accomplished what they were sent out to do and took away a great learning experience.

"The mission was very successful and I think the soldiers that participated in the week-long training left with a much better understanding of marksmanship and are better equipped now to deal with real world shooting situations," Nail said.

These troops will spread what they learned to fellow soldiers in their units.

"People don't realize if you go off to war, that's hardship enough, but your family, other relatives, neighbors and many more have to put up with you being injured or possibly dying," Chockley said. "Not only are you affecting that one individual by sending him into combat zone or harms way, but you are involving all this extended family.

Students take break for souvenir photo: With much of its cadre deployed, training trainers was deemed an efficient way for the 101st to benefit from the knowledge and experience of civilian marksmen.

"It's amazing how a few soldiers can touch so many lives by their commitment to the military; today they are getting their just due for that."

Chockley feels that today's soldiers are doing a good job and with all the proper equipment and the will to survive, they will be able to look back and feel proud of what they did in Iraq.

"America is in good hands with today's professional troops equipped with the best weapons and training of any fighting force in history. They left me feeling humble, proud and impressed at the end of the week. I'm ready to go back and do it (train) again," Chockley said.

Chockley said that he wanted to thank ATA for the company's understanding and support to take the time to train the troops.

CMP and Designated Marksman

Every soldier is a Rifleman, every soldier must be able to defend himself.

— Army Chief of Staff, AUSA Convention, October 2003.

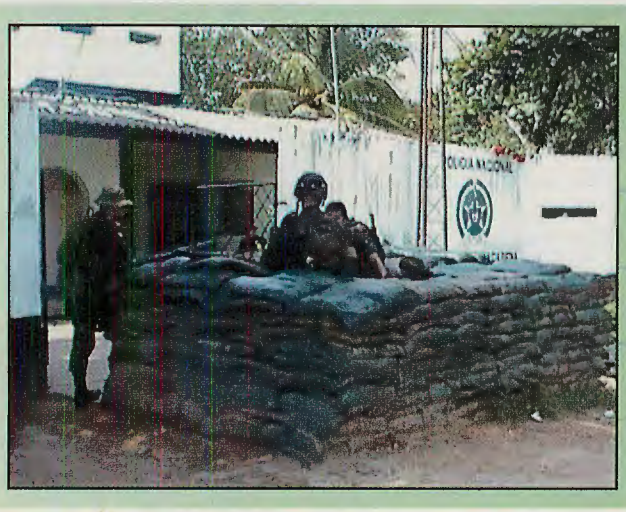
President Theodore Roosevelt initiated the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) in 1903. A retired senior U.S. Army officer and veteran of the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt recognized the need to maintain a cadre of experienced riflemen in the civilian community, who would be able, at short notice, to provide training and marksmanship expertise to all branches of our military, in addition to preserving that expertise in the civilian community.

Roosevelt's foresight paid off in WWII when civilian shooting ranges and clubs around the country opened their doors to local Army and Marine Corps units for marksmanship training over and above what they had learned in boot camp, before those units were sent into combat. Conducted with issue Springfield and Enfield bolt-action rifles, and later on with the M1 Garand, the influence of these additional training sessions on the outcome of the war is immeasurable. General George Patton's endorsement of the Garand as the finest implement of battle ever devised, failed to mention the importance of the individual behind the rifle, and his ability to hit his intended target.

Today, this nation is once again engaged in a protracted shooting war. The need for trained marksmen and women has never been greater. LTC David Liwanag of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Ft. Benning, Georgia explained to *Soldier of Fortune* that the problem the Marksmanship Unit has run into lately is the huge demand from army units for additional training with marksmanship instructors, many of whom are currently deployed overseas. LTC Liwanag contacted the CMP-affiliated Tennessee Shooting Sports Association, and the Kentucky State Rifle and Pistol Association to see if any civilian instructors were available. The Army was able to pay basic travel and lodging expenses for the instructors, most of whom took time off work to teach the class, and also arranged with those individual's employers to grant them a leave of absence for a week. This class is not unique. In March of 2004, instructors from the Texas State Rifle Association taught a similar marksmanship class at Camp Bullis in San Antonio, for troops from the First Cavalry stationed at Ft. Hood, Texas (*SOF* Oct. 2004). Make no mistake, the Civilian Marksmanship Program is as effective now as it ever was — springing up from the grass roots just as Teddy Roosevelt intended, and in perfect step with the intention of the Founding Fathers when they penned the Second Amendment.

— *John Higgs*

BAD PLACE For A COP



Your Orders Are To Defend This Station to the Death: Your Death, Not Mine

BY JIM MORRIS

I spent most of my week in Colombia waiting for an operation that was repeatedly postponed, for weather, because the informant wanted a million bucks, because the Minister of Defense was trying to make a decision.

The third morning Carlos grabbed me. "Wanta go on a training flight to Barrancas?"

"At this point I want to go anywhere. What is it, fly up there and do a few touch and goes?"

He shrugged. "I dunno. Something like that."

Agente de Policia Fredy Rueda, my translator, minder, and friend, and I grabbed our gear, went into flight operations and handed over our ID cards to a cop behind a reception desk, who dutifully entered data on a form on a clipboard, and returned them. "They'll have to come back for us," Fredy said. "They were already taxiing to take off."

Across the flightline the C47 turned and taxied towards us; we walked around the engines, leaning into the propwash, and the door opened. Someone let down a ladder and we climbed aboard.

It was dark inside. We threw our gear into a pile, and strapped in on the bench seats.

It's always a thrill to fly in one of those old airplanes. They've been in service for something like 62 years. It was the C47 that dropped parachutists on the Normandy beachhead, and they're still flying in the outbacks of four continents. It crossed my mind that the last time I flew in one of these I parachuted from it.

Toward the front of the aircraft there was a male Lt. Col., a scholarly-looking man in glasses, a few bored Junglas, strapped in and clinging to their weapons. Looking closer there were five of them. Two carried M16s, actually M203s, the version with the 40mm grenade launcher mounted underneath. The others carried M4s.

Beside the Lt. Col. a rather attractive young woman in jeans, wearing glasses, a woman with the serious air of someone doing a job, had an open attaché case in her lap, and earnestly went over some papers.

The aircraft made an engine runup, turned and built up speed. Looking out the window, really more of a porthole. I watched the grass blur and drop away, and got my first good look at Colombia from the air.

(top) A remote National Police outpost, in the middle of FARC Country is like a little Fort Apache.(above) Agente de Policia *Fredy Rueda was SOF's guide and mentor on this assignment.*

Bogota receded in the distance and we picked up a river, wide and winding through forested hills. "What river?" I asked the crew chief, pointing.

"Rio Magdelena," he replied. Then we went into the clouds.

About an hour later we landed at a small civilian airport. We all deplaned. There were two hueys across the flightline. Everyone but the aircrew headed toward them, so Fredy and I followed. I had no idea where they were going, but I was determined to go with them.

I asked Fredy to find out what was happening. He came back a minute later. The young woman was Victoria Restrepo Uribe. She was the Alternative Development Program Director for Plan Columbia, the Columbian President's plan to wean Columbia from a drug-based economy. It was her job to convince rural farmers to stop growing coca and start growing coffee and bananas.

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FARC Country

The Lt. Col, Henry Gamboa Castaneda, was the CNP's Illegal Crops Eradication Chief for that area. We were going to fly to the town of San Pablo, where she was to hold a town meeting, to convince the farmers to stop growing coca.

This town was smack dab in the middle of FARC country, so it was not a milk run. The five Junglas in the olive green huey were for security. Ours was cream with green trim. But it was a huey, not a civilian craft, and everybody on it was armed but me, Rudy — who hadn't had time to grab a weapon before we left — and Sra. Restropo.

We climbed aboard, crawling over the hip high door, shuffling around and figuring out who sat where. Somehow I got the best seat, in the center directly behind the pilots. The senior pilot, in the right seat, had his name stenciled on the back of his helmet, and the words "Ft. Rucker, Alabama", on a strip of red plastic tape under it. The pilots conferred as the huey rotor advanced to a fast whopping clatter. The chopper gracefully lifted off the tarmac, nose down, tail high. Out the door to my right I saw the olive green chopper wheel and head out. We followed, low and fast.

Just out of rifle range, the country below was wet, green and beautiful. Lakes dotted it, and rivers cut through it. I sat just behind the pilot and co-pilot, looking forward through their bubble. The OG huey went first, snooping closer to the ground. It's mission, it seemed, was to draw fire away from ours. All the Junglas were on that chopper. If we went in they'd go in right after us, pulling us out and keeping the FARC away. If they went in, we'd probably call for help. It was carefully thought out, standard operating procedure.

We Draw A Crowd

We flew for a half hour. Then a big town appeared ahead. It was a small city, but all the roofs were tin or thatch, and the streets were dirt. We circled a few times, very low. Kids stood in the shade, in doorways or under trees, looking up. We were the circus come to town, and we drew a huge crowd, even before we landed.

The hueys circled a soccer field a couple of times and the OG huey with the Junglas on board set down first. The Junglas got off and fanned out. Then we circled down, flared and landed. Soon we were surrounded by kids. Official-looking adults came up and made a formal greeting. Most wore civilian clothes, but there were also some cops from the local station. They wore the same uniform, but they weren't nearly as sharp as the Junglas.

At the corners of the soccer field there were also troops in camo. I took them to be army, and they were.

The local officials led Sra. Restropo and Lt. Col Castaneda across the field to the adjacent school. On the way, standing in the shade of a building, were a few soldiers. One of them was a young captain. He looked pretty sharp. He wore Colombian jump wings and the patch of the Colombian Lancero School, their version of the Ranger School.

I exchanged a few words with the captain, but the army wasn't my story this trip, so we went on after Restropo and

(above) Junglas gear up to go on an operation. (above, right) Well-trained and highly motivated, the Junglas are always ready to rock. (right) Our helicopter lifts off the pad at Barrancas.

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Castaneda. They were in a large open building with a thatch roof. It was sort of like an outdoor auditorium. Fredy and I took folding seats in the back.

The seats started to fill in. Soon the place was full. I had to assume that many of the people there were FARC supporters, or at least suppliers. It didn't take much imagination to picture many of these guys trying to hose down the crop eradication aircraft with AKs.

Fredy explained that, other than shooting at them, they also washed the coca bushes and saved most of the crop. "Our people are very clever," he said.

Nonetheless, they all stood and sang the national anthem, and gave the speakers a respectful hearing.

Major Fernando Lopez was one of the first ten Jungla officers. Four are alive today.

I watched for quite a time. First the locals got to do their introductions. A young guy in a baseball cap got up and made a stemwinder of a speech. He was followed by an older local, then Sra. Restropo, who made the government's pitch to stop growing coca and start growing coffee and bananas.

It's a tough sell. First you have to convince people that a 75% drop in income is a good thing. Then you have to convince them that the government will protect them from the FARC and/or the AUC, when they don't grow coca. The government is not really capable of that, and, if pushed, the speakers have to admit it.

I listened to this for some time, then got up to wander around and see the town.

Fredy was not thrilled. There was plenty of security around the school, but this was a FARC town, and someone might easily decide to take our plan to make them stop growing coca personally.

Nonetheless, I couldn't understand the speeches, and had seen everything worth seeing under the palapa. I think Fredy was afraid I was going to go wandering around the streets, looking for a taco (available in Colombia only in Mexican restaurants), until somebody plugged me. He led me to the head of the local police contingent, a young Captain Prieto.

Grenade Screens

Prieto was a big guy with a smile, and nose, to match, and slightly frizzy reddish hair. He asked me if I'd like to see his headquarters.

"Sure." He and I, Fredy and a couple of cops armed with M16s, rather than the snazzy M4s that the Junglas had, got into his SUV and headed out over the rutted dirt roads of San Pablo. After awhile we hit a few blocks of paved streets. "*Su patria es muy linda, pero este calle* sucks," I said. That was bad Spanish, but they seemed to appreciate the attempt.

We turned a couple of corners and pulled up in front of a badly pockmarked two-story building with grenade screens,

Continued on page 65

Woman Pilots In The CNP Antinarcoticos

In those few days I spent quite a bit of time hanging out in the cafeteria, knocking back cup after cup of powerful *café con leche*, sometimes with Fredy, sometimes with Major Lopez, sometimes with Carlos, and sometimes alone. I was surprised to see that a number of the CNP pilots were women. I hadn't expected that in a macho country.

When I expressed interest in this Major Lopez introduced me to Lt. Col. Luz Nelcy, who had been the first female pilot in the CNP. She is, I must say, the most attractive lieutenant colonel I have ever met. She joined us for lunch, and between my hundred words of Spanish and her hundred words of English we had fun piecing together her story.

Lt. Col. Luz Nelcy was the first woman pilot in the CNP Antinarcoticos. She had to prove herself, and did.

We did well enough that Major Lopez pretty much let us do it ourselves.

No one had wanted her to fly. First it was said that women just couldn't do it, and she had done it. Then it was said that it was too dangerous, so she flew lower, more dangerously, than the guys, and they came to admire her for it. Then it was said that the women would get pregnant and quit. She has two children, but she hasn't quit. Then it was said that there were no facilities for women in their advanced bases, and she said "Tough!" and now the women work the toughest missions alongside the guys and nobody thinks much of it.

Once, sitting alone in the back of the coffeeshop, I watched a table with a senior male lieutenant colonel, surrounded by members of his staff. One of these young women in a flight suit, hair pulled back in a ponytail, came up to report. I'm assuming she was his pilot.

She halted a pace from the desk, in a kind of stiff position of attention, fingers held straight and rigid in the Columbian manner. She made a curt little bow, something I saw many junior officers do when reporting to their superiors. The colonel nodded briskly, then stood and kissed her on the cheek.

Military courtesy, Colombian style.

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Here is just a taste of his vast military experience:

- ✓ He provided personal protection to Hamid Karzai — the current President of Afghanistan. This duty was "Class One" dangerous, with numerous on-going assassination attempts.
- ✓ **He's one of the US Government's top "Classified" counter-terrorism specialists.** That got him shipped *immediately* to the Middle East once the heavy fighting began. I cannot give you current details of his whereabouts over there, or his current duties... or the military brass would come down on both of us like a ton of bricks. But he's there, *fighting*.
- ✓ He's considered one of the *top* specialists we have over there... because, among the many martial arts he's mastered, **he knows the odd styles of hand-to-hand used by Middle Eastern terrorists.** It's NOT karate or ju-jitsu. His special fighting knowledge has kept him in the HEAT of the War on Terror since 1989.
- ✓ He's been a skilled martial artist since he was a kid, and is a recognized (and feared) expert at Muay Thai

He's also spent serious time in the Philippines, and was there when Marcos was toppled and *every American in town was a target.* He and four other Spec Op soldiers had to fight — **without weapons** — for *two solid days*, against knives and sticks and really pissed-off mobs, before finally reaching an American base.

- ✓ And a lot more. He's fought vicious drug lords in Columbia (the kind who behead hostages *faster* — and with more *pleasure* — than the whacked-out terrorists in Iraq do)... and has been "loaned out" to **big-city SWAT units** to take out narcotic labs, as an Assault Team Leader. (The worst were the bathtub "meth" labs run by bikers unafraid to die.) He's been instrumental in over 750 "Code Red" cases, including suicidal hostage-takers.
- ✓ Oh yeah... and he was a **front-line Team Leader for Spec Op units** during Operation Desert Storm, Operation Desert

Shield, and the current Operation Enduring Freedom. Worked with Army Spec Op, Navy Special Warfare, Air Force Spec Op, FBI, DEA, DELTA… it goes on and on. Medals, citations and awards up the yin-yang. Has held **Top Secret clearance** (you know what **that** means).

Boodry is the most sought-after professional soldier/fighter/special operations leader you'll ever meet.

And it's okay to ask "Why?"

Here's the answer: I cannot even begin to list the martial arts Boodry is an expert at. **But here's where Boodry goes WAY beyond any other teacher you'll ever know:** After YEARS of bloody hand-to-hand combat in "real world" situations of life-and-death… he learned to REDUCE all martial art skills down to

Just A FEW EASY MOVES.

Have you got that? There are a ton of "wannabe" fighters out there who say they have easy systems to teach you. But they're *lying*… because they've NEVER able to actually test, perfect, and refine their systems in **constant mortal combat**.

Boodry is THE man among elite Spec Op soldiers heading into the difficult combat overseas right now. Because…

- ✓ **He knows that you will ALWAYS be fighting more than just one person at a time**… and the others may be hiding, or waiting to come at you… so you cannot afford to waste more than a few seconds taking any attacker out.
- ✓ **He knows that ANY "fancy" fighting move will FAIL under the stress of real-world combat.** FAIL. There is no artistry in street-level fighting, when your life is on the line against terrorists and enemy combatants. ALL of your "fine" motor skills (the delicate muscle movements and strikes of formal fighting) become numbed-out and *worthless* when the adrenaline starts flowing.

Nope. You need to know basic, animalistic "gross motor skills" to survive and win — **the kind of natural, instinctual moves and skills that work no matter how stressed-out you are, or how much pain you're in, or what the situation is.**

That's why Boodry's extensive education in martial arts is so important — he's not just "saying" that most of the fancy, stuff doesn't work in real combat.

He's Already Proved What Works And What Will Get You Killed.

This guy has blood on his hands, and decades of experience to prove his point.

This is GREAT NEWS for anyone who's been dreaming of a truly effective fighting system that is…

- ✓ **Easy to learn fast,** because the moves are so simple and basic, and there's no need for practice, no need for formal training, and no need for high-end conditioning.
- ✓ **It works no matter what shape you're in** — against multiple attackers, armed attackers, and highly-skilled gangs who have ambushed you in the dark. You can be wounded, dizzy, drunk or exhausted… and it STILL works like crazy to take out ANYONE who screws with you.
- ✓ Even better… **you don't need prior training, don't need to be big or strong, and you don't even need to have any prior fighting experience under your belt.**

Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?

Well, the soldiers and special agents who line up to learn at Boodry's knee don't CARE if it "sounds" too easy, too simple, or too strange.

They just want to learn the *simple and immediate skills of kicking serious ass* under horrible combat conditions.

And they CAN'T spend a lot of time learning hand-to-hand. A soldier's first weapon will always be the gun. Then the blade.

When a soldier has been forced to use hand-to-hand, that means things are *really screwed up*… and his life is in immediate danger. He needs to be able to "click" his body into FULL KICK-ASS GEAR instantly… and get busy taking out everyone he can reach.

That's What Makes This So Great For Civilians!

We can't walk around armed to the teeth, like a soldier. ***We HAVE to rely on hand-to-hand almost every time we are surprised, ambushed, or attacked.***

And that's why my money is on this amazing new simple fighting system created by Boodry for combat soldiers in the Middle East. They're fighting in the streets, in "urban" warfare. And, because of the politics, they CAN'T always just kill everyone they encounter.

That would start another riot, and they can't afford that.

Same with civilians. You can't just kill everyone who pisses you off, or even pushes you down in a bar.

So you NEED a system like this — which allows you:

1. To totally dominate anyone who threatens you…
2. Without killing them (right away)…
3. **So you CONTROL them until you decide what to do.**

It's up to you, completely, how things turn out. This gives the ability to fight when you have to, and not worry about going to jail because you've just ripped someone's head off.

Oh, you'll still leave them on the ground, unconscious, humiliated, *hurt.* **And they'll regret the day they got in your face.** But you don't have to worry about having killed someone. Unless… you're in one of those horrible situations where you MUST deliver lethal power to save your loved ones or yourself.

You've got to SEE this new system for yourself to understand it fully. There are only a few "core" moves. Boodry teaches you EXACTLY how to get your "mindset" right, in a split second… so you are NEVER vulnerable.

And yet, this is NOT the "usual" menu of chokes, kicks, bites and manipulations you'd see in ANY OTHER fighting system out there.

What you see here will blow your mind.

It's the answer to anyone who has dreamed of a truly vicious set of skills that can be learned just by watching the training… and absolutely COMPLETES your need for effective hand-to-hand self defense in the real world. **Wow.**

Here's just a "taste" of what you're about to learn, fast and without sweat:

- **What to expect to happen to your body when the stress of lethal combat gets in your face… and what to DO about it.** (Knowing the physiological reactions that happen, and the secrets of CONTROLLING those reactions, mean you'll NEVER BE NERVOUS… and you'll know exactly what to do with the river of adrenaline that starts pumping.)
- **Why soldiers with real combat experience shun "fancy" strikes that require practice and delicate moves… and rely ONLY on basic, simple, "natural" and instinctive moves to obliterate any opponent in a split second.** (They need to take care of each attacker so fast because there's usually another one right behind him.)
- How to make MAXIMUM USE of your "startle" reflexes when ambushed or surprised by violence… **so you channel your natural "kick the living crap out of him" impulses with laser focus that cannot be defended against!**
- "Live fire" secrets that automatically keep you loose and mobile (and impossible for your opponent to "get a bead on", which keeps him confused and unable to land a blow).
- **The "total" mindset you MUST get into to dominate an attacker.** This is what separates the men who survive from the boys who get humiliated, or killed. (It's easy to "fuse" this mindset into your system, too, once Boodry shows you the *simple secret.)*
- **How to "cycle" blows,** within 3-second

bursts, that never allow your opponent a chance to recover or return the attack.

- **The 8 "instinct" moves that are ALL you need to know for real combat.** (Pure animal viciousness at your sudden command, whenever you need it.) NO ONE, of any size or strength or skill level, can stand against these basic, brutal strikes.
- **Front-line ground techniques soldiers demand to learn** — easy stuff that *eliminates* the ridiculous training time other grappling systems require. These are the "instinctual" basics that your body will instantly recognize and be able to USE.

And a ton more. But the basic stuff can be learned JUST BY WATCHING the training. And, again, **you don't even need to be shape to master this stuff.**

This is PERFECT for civilians like us. Easy to master, simple to use when needed, and you don't have to devote much time to getting it down.

This will change your life. Instantly.

But hey — if this stuff is really so good, and so many active soldiers and SWAT guys demand to know it…

Why Haven't You Heard About Boodry Before?

Because… he hasn't had the time to train anyone BUT professionals.

However, he's about to retire from military service. **And the military has NOT yet secured a "do not reveal" order for his training.** (Even though Boodry "invented" this new system from his experience with combat and martial arts — and he is solely responsible for every detail of it — the military has a bad habit of demanding *secrecy*.)

So Boodry knows he has a short "window of opportunity" to lay the groundwork for his teaching career. He knows that getting his reputation out there is crucial… and *very* time-sensitive.

So he's agreed to allow us to get the word out, for as long as we're able. To a "select" group of guys like you, who are hip to just how important this stuff really is.

This is GREAT news for you. It means… if you act fast… *you can see EXACTLY the same fighting secrets now being used by the most active soldiers in the most active battlegrounds today!*

And I've got it ALL on DVD for you. Boodry himself, teaching every detail of his mega-dangerous, super-simple and easy fighting system.

You're in for a treat… if you have the guts to act fast.

Here's the deal: I will rush this package to you so you can see everything for FREE, if you choose, and… **You don't risk a penny**… more on that in a minute.

Call my office right now. The number is **1-800-899-8153**, and I want to you tell the person who answers "*I want the Boodry DVDs, fast*". They're not free, but you can *see* them for free, if you choose.

Here's how: To get your DVD package rushed out to you, we'll charge your credit card $97. That's the low, super-discounted price of this package that Boodry insisted we charge — I believe we could charge $500 and *more* for this stuff, but Boodry is dead-set against "gouging" people. This $97 price point is a HUGE bargain.

Once you get the package, I'll give you a full 90 DAYS to check it out, however you see fit. I don't want you to feel that you're under any pressure to decide.

If — even on the last day of your 90 DAY guarantee — you decide these DVDs are not what you thought they'd be… *simply send the package back for a full refund of your $97.* No questions will be asked. You do not even need a reason — just send them back with a note saying "Sorry, but I want a refund".

That means you get a…

90 Day, No Risk, 100% Money-Back Guarantee!

If you do decide to ask for a refund… that means you will have seen everything…

For FREE!

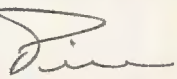
But, you have to HURRY.

If you prefer to pay by check or money order (payable to TRS), you can just fill out the Priority Order Form below and mail it in with your payment. You will still get the 90 day no-risk guarantee.

Boodry really is everything I've said he is. He is the REAL DEAL — a combat veteran of HUGE respect and experience… who knows how to TEACH YOU the same combat secrets he teaches other soldiers who must face death in the Middle East battlefields and mean streets.

So don't put this off, or you'll miss out.

Sincerely,



Bob

P.S. I almost forgot — **I have a FREE gift for you, too.** Boodry insisted I send you this extra DVD he made, free. It's all about close quarters knife fighting — the principles behind using a blade, how to carry it, slash and cut methods used by soldiers, and unique self-defense methods using a knife that NO ONE ELSE has ever revealed to civilians before.

This bonus DVD is yours free, to *keep* no matter what else you decide.

Here's what other fighters are saying about Boodry — it's pretty amazing, the respect and awe this guy gets from the best in the biz. Listen to this:

"…without a doubt the best and most effective fighting system I have ever seen. It is absolutely brutal!" ***Jake B., US Army Special Forces*** • *"I have never seen a more direct and physically intimidating hand to hand combat system! I have used it and it works!"* ***Mike, U.S. Navy SEAL*** • *I have personnally conducted special operations with Glen overseas and have witnessed him use his system under some of the worst possible conditions! This systems is extremely effective and direct!* ***Terry, U.S. Navy SEAL*** • *"I use these on the streets and they work. The skills that are given here are second to none and have been forged through experience."* ***Dewane F., Las Vegas Metro Police Department*** • *What makes these videos different is that Boodry has literally been there and done that! He's a legitimate special operations operator who teaches from a well trained and experienced eye. I've used the material Boodry teaches and I strongly recommend these videos!* ***Mike, Special Forces (Delta Force)***

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❑ **YES!** Thanks for giving the chance to check this amazing combat "quick learn" system out while it's still available. I want to see this package NOW — so rush it to me. I understand I have a complete no risk, 100% money-back guarantee for 90 DAYS (with no questions asked) that's a great deal… This must be the real thing. Here's where to rush the package, and how I'm paying:

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❑ I prefer to pay with my credit card; Order Please charge my:
❑ MC ❑ Visa ❑ AmEx ❑ Discover

❑ Enclosed is my Check or Money (payable to TRS) for $97.

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Mercs Screwed Up, Set Up, Sold Out

Not Even "Splodges of Wonga" Can Save You When You Break the Basic Rules

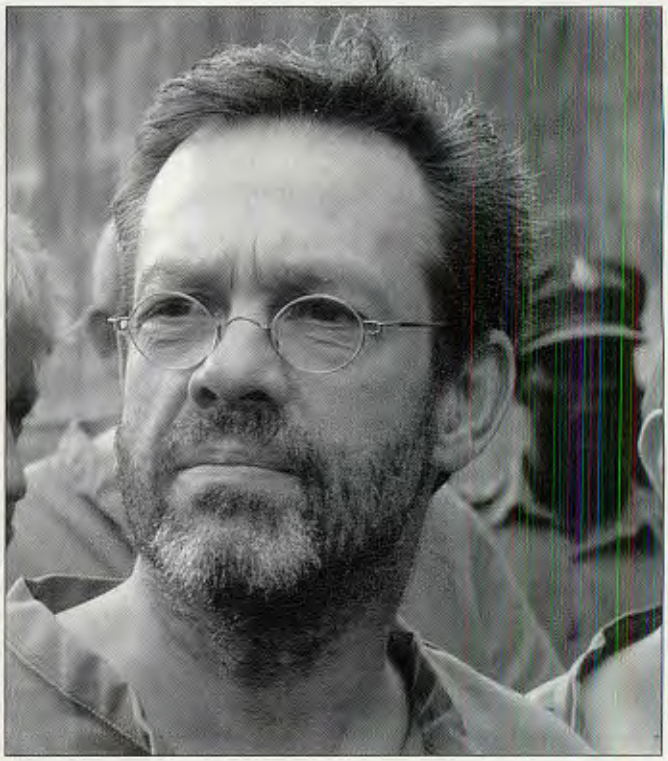
BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

In the first part of this series, we looked at the financiers of the recent coup in Equatorial Guinea, including the involvement of Sir Mark Thatcher, son of the former Prime Minister of the U.K. The objective of the conspirators was to overthrow the barbaric dictatorial regime of Equatorial Guinea, and to install exiled former president Severo Moto.

Potential profits included large sums of money as well as shares in the oil production of the third largest oil producer in Africa.

The plot is convoluted and complex, and spans Africa, Europe and the United States.

Last month we looked at the current situation in Equatorial Guinea, including the methods of the barbaric president. We saw the recklessness of the mercs, as they recruited troops in South Africa and raised cash for the coup.



AFP PHOTO/FILES

Simon Mann, one of Africas best known mercenaries who was involved in the company Executive Outcomes, led the group of seventy suspected mercs arrested in Zimbabwe on charges of trying to topple the president of Equatorial Guinea. Mann believed that big bucks — including former British Prime Minister Mark Thatcher's son — and the great powers, including the Zimbabwe Defense Industry and Spanish authorities, were behind him.

Early December 2003, Equatorial Guinea President Obiang, alarmed by rumors of one more coup being planned to overthrow him, met with South African President Thabo Mbeki in Pretoria, South Africa. This time the plot appeared to be much more threatening, as now the two leaders were convinced that the West was determined to overthrow Obiang. Especially since oil riches had been found in Equatorial Guinea.

The two *jefes* schemed to discover the plan of the mercenaries plotting the Equatorial Guinea coup.

Around the same time, Simon Mann, former SAS and legendary British merc, was meeting with Equatorial Guinea exiled rebel leader Severo Moto, who had been convicted of treason for a previous Equatorial Guinea coup attempt.

"Mann is widely detested by former South African special forces members for his exploitative tactics," a former South African intel officer told *SOF*. Mann had captured the imagination of adventure seekers and amassed fortunes through the exploits of his notorious company Executive Outcomes, and other African adventures.

Zimbabwe's President Mugabe and Obiang were convinced that the conspirators were meeting with Western spy agencies.

"They were aided by the British secret service, that is MI6, and the American CIA, and the Spanish secret service," Zimbabwe's Home affairs Minister Kembo Mohadi said, according to *Africa Confidential*.

Enemy Powers

Obiang accused "Enemy powers" and multinational companies of plotting against him. Mugabe claimed that the sanctions imposed by the U.S. and the U.K. were part of a well-coordinated attack on Mugabe by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, as retaliation for Mugabe's seizures of white-owned farms in Zimbabwe, according to *Reuters*.

Indeed, Spanish authorities were plotting to issue a warrant for Obiang and arrest him while he was traveling, as they had arrested Chilean General Augusto Pinochet when he was in London for medical treatment.

The U.S. allegedly was deeply involved. Greg Wales, a

"Picture Two People, Locked In Mortal Combat, One Strangling The Other. Now, Imagine Yourself In This Scene And Tell Me... What Would You Do?"

(Hint: Whatever Your Answer, The Odds Are... It's Wrong!)

Kick him in the groin." "Strike the arms or punch the solar plexus." "Grab the hands." "Stomp on his instep."

The list is always the same. Unfortunately... each answer puts YOUR life at risk in the face of a life-or-death assault.

Why? Because invariably when Tim Larkin asks students this question at his ***Target-Focus™ Training*** bootcamps...

No One—Not Even Trained Martial Artists—Sees THEMSELVES As The One Doing The Choking!! They're always the one BEING choked.

But think about it... couldn't this be the scenario?

You're surprised by two attackers. You've left the first on the ground writhing in pain, and now have control of the second one and are about to make him wish he'd never targeted you today...

Possible? Sure. It's just that no one sees it this way.

Here's the problem: Some thug comes up, places a knife to your throat and demands your wallet. Taking him at his word you give him the wallet. He then proceeds to stab you repeatedly leaving you in a pool of your own blood, stunned that you've been stabbed.

What went wrong? Just this. You ASSUMED he only wanted the wallet. After all, why would anyone stab someone over a few measly bucks? YOU certainly wouldn't do that if you were robbing someone.

And that IS the problem. See, think like that and...

You've Just Transferred Your Own Moral Code To A Sociopathic Killer... And With It, Quite Possibly, Your Life.

See, nothing bothers him. He's not bound by your morals or rules. He has no regret at all in cramming a blade into your gut... if that's what it takes to get what he wants.

Yet you stroll around thinking 15 years of martial arts training or that 6-week self-defense course or some reality fighting guru's video gives you the edge against someone like this. **Wake up!**

You are hopelessly training techniques (then praying they work) against some thug who isn't 'training' for you at all. How many criminals in federal pens spent years sweating through JKD workouts before committing their crime? How many are Jujitsu experts?

Not a one! They excel at just one thing: doin' it. No training, no practice, no techniques. And certainly no 'rules'. So why squander years fooling yourself with something that only works "if everyone plays by the rules"?

Thess are the facts: 98.1% of us, caught in an unavoidable violent attack (even those with years of training), would never consider doing "whatever it takes" to survive—like gouging our attacker's eyes—even if they were the the only means of saving our own life.

That's why TFT teaches both mind and body to act in unison, training you for the real threat in your life... criminal violence. It shows you how to deal with the ultra violence of a life-or-death confrontation (it's very easy to ramp this down to fit a lesser situation but impossible to ramp up to a "killing-set" if you've never trained for it. By the way, is this you?).

Make no mistake... Larkin doesn't advocate violence. TFT just de-mystifies it. He's often quoted...

"Violence Is Rarely The Answer. But When It Is... It's The Only Answer."

Look... others try to impress you with how 'bad' they are, with their accomplishments in some "secret military or government world" you and I aren't privy to, or with their athletically-gifted 'guru' status. Larkin isn't like that.

His record IS impressive. He trains units from all the top echelons of federal law enforcement and military special operations groups. It's not surprising since he comes from that world and is well known there. But everyone now claims they teach this type of training so even though he's often treated like a guru there, you'll rarely hear him talk about it.

He is an awesome communicator and trainer, and is amazingly approachable for someone with his abilities and credentials. He's trained 1,000's of CEOs and others in high-risk positions around the world—all very real people. But why is this so important?

Why is TFT being sought out in all these other arenas?

Because it works! Because you "get it" immediately. There's no waiting. It's usable instantly... and it stays with you forever, even without practice.

Take fear. Others say they will make you 'fearless'. It's a total lie! **Fear is hardwired into our brains.** TFT instead quickly and easily reprograms your muscle 'software' enabling you to take deliberate action... despite your fear.

Here's what *TFT* is about: the key to this system lies in the fact this is the only system based totally on PRINCIPLES (not techniques) that determine the outcome of any physical confrontation. Combine these with three supporting methodologies that form the foundation of every fighting system on the planet and you have a complete system for handling any violent confrontation.

"It was the most effective five days of training in hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon that I and everyone else had ever experienced." **Brian (last name withheld), US Border Patrol**

Last year Larkin trained over 600 CEO's in Europe. These folks ate his stuff up because ***TFT*** principles are as effective in business 'combat' as they are in a truly lethal fight, and for the exact same reason... RESULTS.

Think about this: If these people can get this much from his material, **imagine how much more you can learn**... a dedicated reader of Soldier of Fortune magazine who is really into finding and applying a personal protection system that is quickly learned and deadly effective. If all these folks are seeking him out, shouldn't you be too?

Larkin is swamped and realizes he can't begin to reach everyone. He'd love to have you as a member of his organization and take part in his live training but realizes few will be able to do this. Training camps run $1,500.00, international events start at $9,500.00, and personal training for small 2- to 4-person sessions is $10,000.00 and more.

That's why, in a daring move with potentially serious ramifications, he's released a new WEAPONS-focused version of his TFT system that shows you how to defeat a violent criminal in a **WORSE-than-worst-case scenario.**

Listen. I understand you may find this hard to believe. That's how I felt too until I saw the DVDs. Unfortunately there's not room here to adequately describe the **shocking reality of what Larkin has created for you**. That's why he's not asking for a penny of your money now. Instead he'll spend his own cash to put a 17-page Special Report into your hands that will prove everything you've just read and explain why this program is so **radically DIFFERENT** from anything you've seen before.

All you need to do to get his **FREE** report is pick up the phone and call **888-811-9347**. There's a short message and then you can leave your name and address so the report can be mailed to you. Since it's voicemail, you can call 24-hours a day, 7 days a week and no one will hassel you.

Call now. There's no obligation.

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"How To Instantly Hobble, Cripple Or Destroy Your Adversary Using Leverage Principles Not Even Whispered About In Public Before"

Everyone knows the quickest way to end a violent life-or-death confrontation is by crushing your assailant's joints... blowing a knee, snapping an ankle, ripping a shoulder.

But even if you only intend to use joint manipulation to end a bar fight, win a MA sporting competition or control a suspect, what you may not realize is that...

In Each Case, The Surprising Secret To Your Success Is Exactly The Same...

It's Knowing HOW To BREAK Any Joint In The Human Body...

EVEN IF YOU NEVER INTEND TO ACTUALLY DO IT!

That's because you've got to know what's required to actually break a joint... if you ever hope to execute that same leverage WITHOUT causing physical harm!

Yet even though it's critical to understand the secrets behind joint breaking, right now you likely haven't a prayer of executing this stuff in a real-world confrontation, regardless of your experience!

Here's why:

1. Everything you've been taught about this subject is so friggin' complex, Einstein himself couldn't figure it out!

For example, you're fed a steady line about there being "hundreds of ways to break a joint." But it's just BULL!

There **aren't hundreds of ways** -- there is **only ONE**!

And within this one, there are just 6 things you can do to make it happen. That's it!

What this means is you're spending years memorizing useless TECHNIQUES when in fact it's really all about... **PRINCIPLES**. Learn the simple principles behind this stuff... and you can generate any technique... whenever you need it... right on the fly!

2. There IS a SECRET to making any leverage work. Unfortunately, no one's ever explained this to you before. And without understanding it... you will almost never make a joint break... or joint manipulation... work.

Well, finally someone IS teaching it... in an easy-to-understand format that anyone can quickly learn.

This is all clearly described in a new report that explains exactly why no one has shown this to you before. And while material like this usually applies only to life-threatening situations, this one is VERY DIFFERENT... because... it **works equally well in any situation**... even sporting applications.

Get this **FREE** 14-page Report and check it out for yourself. Just call **877-355-1464**. Leave your name and address and we'll mail it to you immediately. You can call 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Or access this information on-line at **www.sofleverage.com**

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AFP PHOTO / FILES / Javier SORIANO

Severo Moto, exiled Equatorial Guinea rebel leader in Madrid. Moto, President of the Progress Party of Equatorial Guinea)PP) was accused of high treason for a failed coup attemp in 1997. Moto allegedly masterminded the plot from his home in exile in Spain. Zimbabwe and Equatorial Guinea accused the U.K. the U.S. and Spain for supporting the coup. The prosecutor demanded a death sentence for the exiled leader.

British businessman met a senior Pentagon official and told her the situation in Equatorial Guinea had become "dangerous" and to expect trouble, according to the *UK Times,* which received a confirmation of the meeting by the official. Later Nick Du Toit, coup mastermind and famous South African arms dealer, identified Wales, in a sworn statement, as a key organizer.

"Wales called me and asked me to meet him on 4 January 2004 in Sandtan, South Africa. He said he had a business proposition for me ... He explained that he had in mind a coup d'etat ... and asked if I would help ... On 7 January I saw Greg again. This time he was with Simon Mann, who I knew since 1998.

"I agreed to help with the provision of vehicles and guides. Simon asked me to provide assistance to obtain arms. I said I knew people at Zimbabwe Defense Industries (ZDI) in Harare," the *Independent* quotes du Toit.

Mann confirmed, saying that Wales was present when he first met Moto.

Wales, a frequent visitor to Washington discussed the possibility that Obiang could be arrested by U.S. officials for money laundering and human rights abuses.

"The State Department was under increasing pressure, because of Obiang's reputation, to impose penalties on Equatorial Guinea which would have damaged American oil interests," Wales told the *Times.*

Little did Mann know that African intelligence services had been tapping his phone and monitoring his activities in the run-up to the March events.

In a rare moment of African brotherhood, the combative leaders of Equatorial Guinea, South Africa, and Zimbabwe had found a common enemy.

Zimbabwe President Mugabe, ZDI, and the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) boasted of foiling the coup plot.

South African Defense Forces, in collaboration with the Zimbabwean CIO, watched as the chief conspirators trained their recruits in South Africa. Ronnie Kasrils, South Africa's intelligence minister, bragged of infiltrating the alleged conspiracy to overthrow Obiang from the time the plot began to unfold, according to the UK *Times.*

Mercenary Training Camp

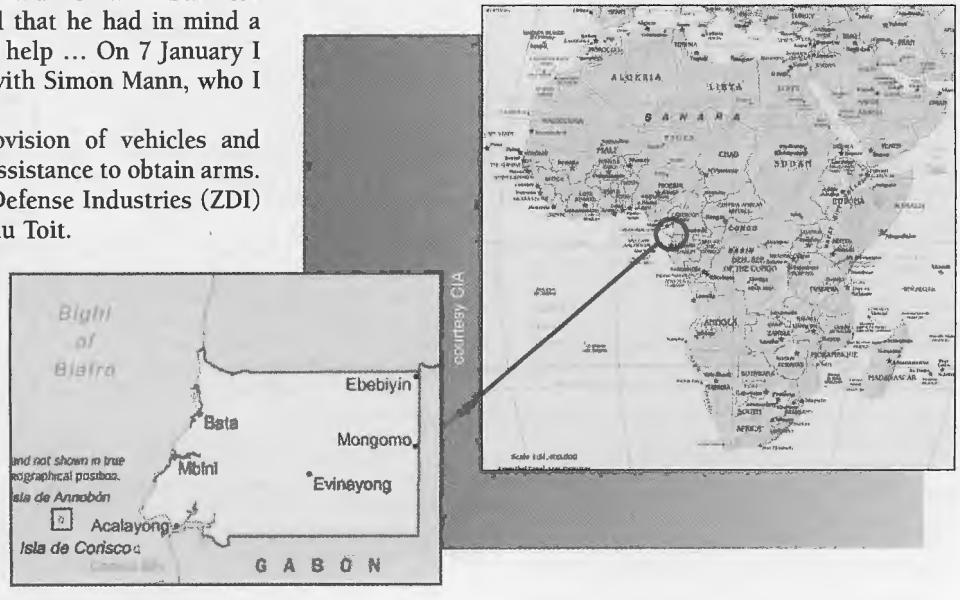
"Authorities in Zimbabwe knew all about it, or at least knew of a mercenary training camp in SA, and the flight," an intelligence source told *New Zimbabwe.*

"A source indicated that the group was on its way to a clandestine training camp in Cameroon, to prepare for the Equatorial Guinea coup. The same camp has been used in the past six months to train and equip opposition groups in Equatorial Guinea," *SOF*'s South African intel source said.

Equatorial Guinea officials also boasted that police and army leaders had orchestrated the multinational sting.

Du Toit, who was to recruit and train mercs, and organize operations within Equatorial Guinea itself, was well connected with that country's officials. Du Toit set up a company in December 2003 — Triple Option Trading — that was half-owned by three senior members of Equatorial Guinea's ruling political elite. Some claim that the government used Du Toit to infiltrate the plot, according to the Observer.

The stakes were high. On 15 November 2003, Mann's British Virgin Island company, Logo Logistics, signed an agreement with a group of Lebanese investors in the Asian Trading and Investment Group SAL. Under the terms of the deal — seen by *The Observer* — the Lebanese investors were to provide Mann's company with five million dollars for 'mining, fishing, aviation and commercial security projects in West Africa'. Mann also signed an agreement with Nick Du Toit on



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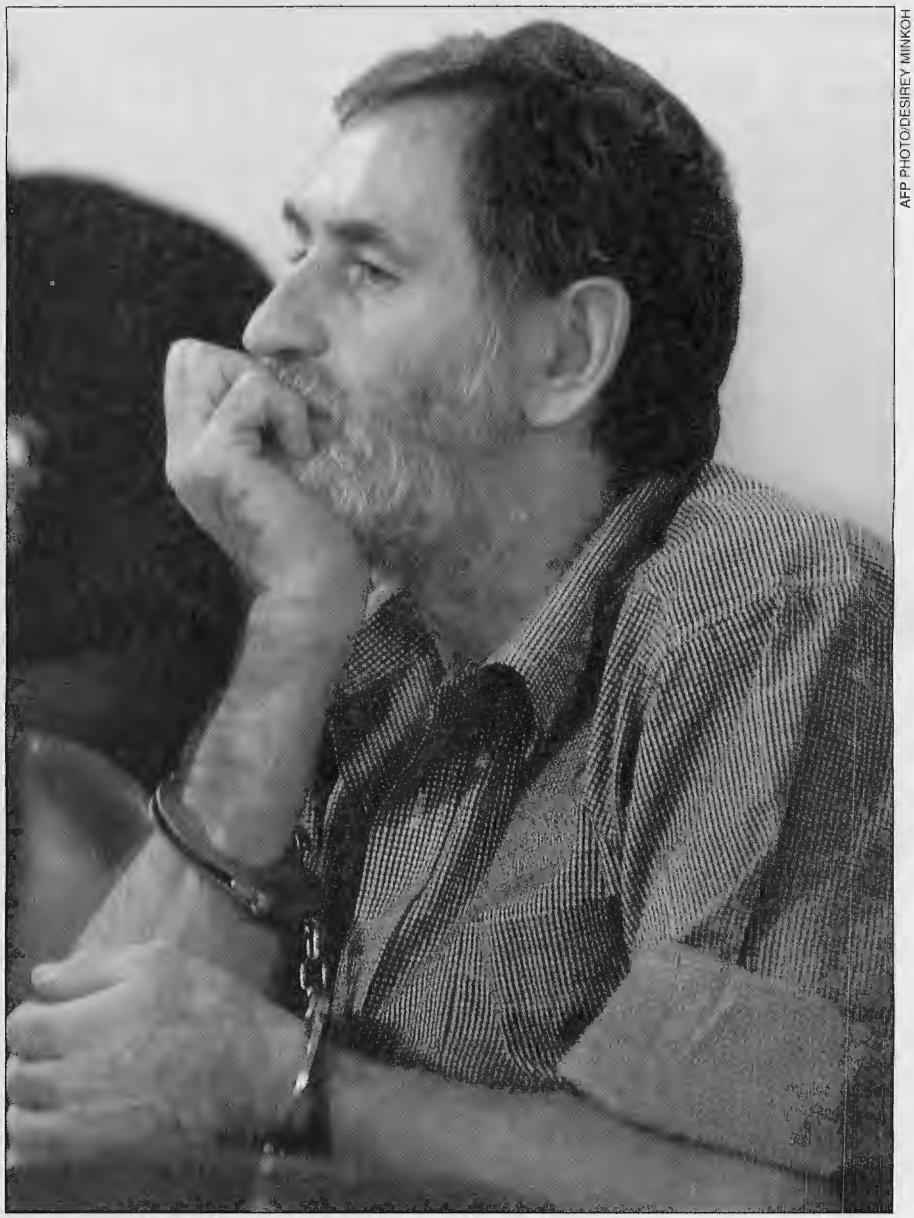

AFP PHOTO/DESIREY MINKOH

South African Nick du Toit, famed arms dealer and co conspirator of the failed coup in Equatorial Guinea is handcuffed at the Congress Palace in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. Du Toit organized the advance party of 15 suspected mercs in Equatorial Guinea. The prosecution demanded death sentences and jail terms exceeding a century.

1 December, which guaranteed financing from Logo Logistics of up to two million dollars for 'unspecified projects'.

ZDI officials, Group Captain Hope Mutize, and General Tshinga Dube, head of ZDI, were heavily involved in the deal.

State prosecutor Mary Zimba-Dube later said that that Mutize received a deposit of US$90,000 for the $180,000 consignment of "dangerous weapons", which included 61 AK-47's and 45 000 rounds of ammunition; ten Browning pistols and 500 rounds of ammunition; 20 PKM light machine guns with 30,000 rounds of ammunition; 100 RPG7s, two 60mm mortars, 80 60mm mortar rounds, and 1,500 hand grenades.

Mann later confessed that he had been trying to get Zimbabwe President Mugabe, on board by pretending to back a rebel army in the Democratic Republic of Congo, so that the greedy Mugabe could acquire Congolese diamonds to help in the economic crises he has created in Zimbabwe.

"Naively, I believed that by dealing with ZDI I was dealing at a very high level and would be fully covered," Mann said.

"Imbeciles"

"They were imbeciles," South African Colonel Des Burman, who had served with the Buffalo Battalion, an elite anti-terrorist unit of the South African Defense Force under the Apartheid regime told the *UK Times*

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The information that you have collated/presented in the videos and in the articles is direct and to the point. You don't glorify the act of self defense in fact it makes one realize that the old adage of "prevention is better than cure", e.g. awareness etc. is the primary principle to grasp. A lot of sites, publication etc. always appear to have a secret technique that has remained so for years & years but credit to you and Mr. Cestari you haven't made things complicated but always simple and effective which is obviously the case in live situations. In addition to the above you have also avoided the "if he does this" then "you must do that" etc., thus avoiding the clone syndrome. Principles of Self Defense are far more important than the a-b-c as no two situations or people are the same. I would like to thank you for being honest about what works and what doesn't and for providing simple and effective techniques/principles again proven to work for real and not just in the gym. Thanks for keeping it real yours faithfully *- Steven S. - United Kingdom*

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"Mann broke every rule. He was in Zimbabwe to buy weapons; you never buy weapons in Africa. You buy everything offshore and have it delivered to your theater. Second, always operate from a safe country. Zimbabwe's not safe, and neither is South Africa. The South Africans are embarrassed by all the mercenaries operating here, and they've been trying to catch them. The South African security forces set Mann up," Des Burman said.

In late January, with most of the plans in place, Du Toit flew to Johannesburg to brief Mann.

In February, Mann flew to Harare to discuss a consignment of arms with the state-owned ZDI. The plan was for the arms to be delivered on 19 or 20 February to the airstrip at Kolwezi in Congo, under the control of a local rebel leader. There a plane would cross-load the weapons from Harare, refuel and fly on to Equatorial Guinea. But on the appointed day, for reasons unknown, neither rebel leader nor fuel turned up, according to the *Observer*.

A *Times UK* account claimed that the coup was aborted when a bird struck the engine of his Russian Antonov 12 and the rebels failed to secure an airstrip at Kolwezi, in southern DRC.

> "They (the mercs) were aided by MI6 ..., the CIA, and the Spanish Secret Service".

On 5 March, Mann went to Zimbabwe from the Democratic Republic of Congo, accompanied by South Africans Laurens Jacobus Horn and Carlos Jacob Hermanus, to act as advance group for the plane and crew that were to collect the consignment of weapons the next day.

That same day, South African intelligence officers who had been trailing the conspirators, checked into a local hotel and waited for the aircrew to arrive from South Africa. Their colleagues in South Africa were informing them of the movements of the suspected mercs. *Independent*.

On 6 March Captain Neil Steyl and co-pilot Hendrick Hamman, with $30,000 in cash for fuel, $100,000 in cash for operations, and sixty-five mercs with South African passports, flew from Principe to Sao Tome, then on to South Africa.

On 7 March, the four crewmen took off from Lanseria Airport in Johannesburg at 0655 hrs, en route to Wonderboom Airport in Pretoria. The plane departed Wonderboom at 1607 hrs with 67 passengers heading for Polokwane International Airport where it landed at 1635 hrs. From Polokwane they took off for Harare at 1824 hrs.

South African Agents

The Boeing 727-100 taxied to the military section of the Harare airport at 1930 hrs, where the South African agents met them.

Mann, Horn and Hermanus, accompanied by Dube were also waiting on the runway.

"Dube had apparently betrayed Mann to the authorities," South African intelligence sources informed *SOF*

Continued on page 74

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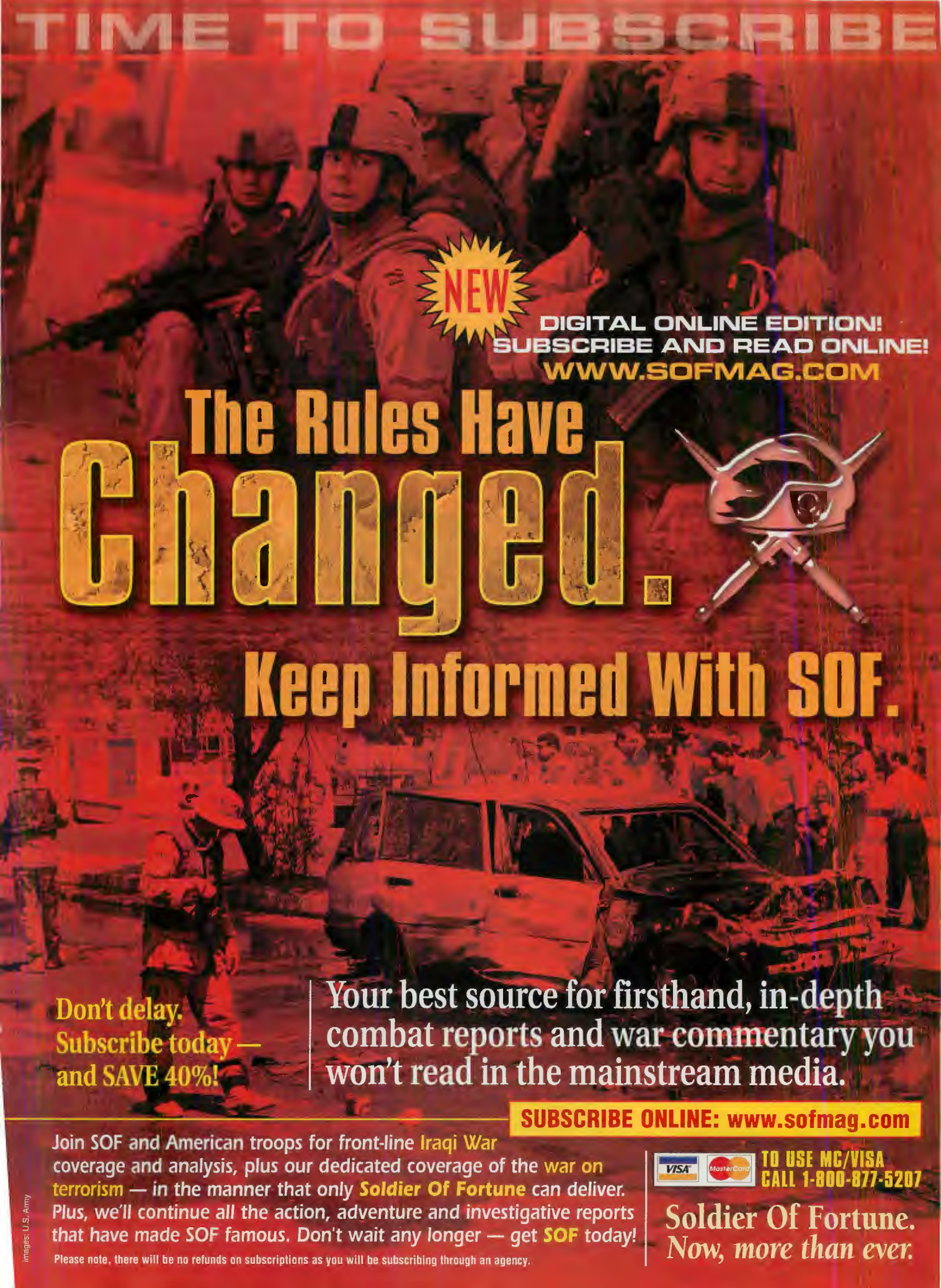
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TERRORISM SITREP

By Dr. Martin Brass

1. UNITED STATES GULFSTREAM V TURBOJET with tail number N379P being used to transport hooded and handcuffed terrorists globally. Owner, Premier Executive Transport Services Inc., lists officers that don't exist with "sterile" identities, recently issued SS numbers and 325 names listed to five P.O. boxes, for which *Washington Post* researchers found no previous addresses, telephone numbers or business records. Births were listed from 1940s to 1960s, but SS numbers listed range from 1998-2003. CIA is flying prisoners for "detention" and "interrogation" in a secret "rendition" process: SECRET NIGHTTIME missions fly to Islamabad; Karachi; Riyad; Baghdad, Morocco, and Cairo, among others. Suspects are flown to countries that use harsh interrogation methods outlawed in U.S., according to World Organization for Human Rights USA. At least one new tail number has been issued.

2. THAILAND PHOTOS OF 3,000 Islamic Rebels supposedly training in Malaysia shown by Thai government may be fake. The "jungle pictures" were students in sports-day parade, according to *The Nation*.

3. MYANAMAR (BURMA) CEASE FIRE with the Karen National Union breaks down with confrontation between hundreds of Burmese troops and Karen insurgents. Over the years, *SOF* has supported the Karens with medical equipment and training.

4. COLOMBIA CONTRACTORS recruiting active and retired soldiers for security work with big pay in Iraq. Veterans of the 40-year insurgency offer a lot of experience at war. URIBE changes law so he can run for second term. Kidnappings fall by one third and murders, from 2200 to 1400 last year, due to hardball tactics by Uribe.

5. PERU COLOMBIAN COCAINE mafias find new coca production fields. Coca price increases tenfold.

6. FRANCE KIDNAPPED FRENCH JOURNALISTS in Iraq are returned. Kidnap of two was in protest of French crackdown of wearing veils in public schools. Tactics backfire as French Muslims rebelled against such terrorist tactics. By 2050, 20 percent of Europe will be Islamic, creating increased violent clash of cultures if fundamentalists do not assimilate to Western culture.

7. RUSSIA FIVE OF GANG of 10 Muslim terrorists who killed 90 last June in Ingushetia killed by Russian Defense Ministry Task Force, when they tried to rush the force with seven grenade launchers.

8. SPAIN BASQUE TERRORIST members of ETA on rampage of a dozen bombings, some at gas stations. Group phoned-in bomb threat at Madrid soccer game: 70,000 evacuated. U.S. embassy warns that "terrorists in Spain remain operationally active."

12. IRAQ U.S. FORCES CAPTURE two al-Qaeda king-pins who were working for Jordan-based Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda. Saleh Arugayan Kahlil and Bassim Mohammad Hazeem and co-terrorists created routes for terrorists to enter Iraq and are held responsible for executing 11 Iraqi National Guardsmen. Attacks against U.S. troops double from 900 per month to 2,000 per month in one year. VIDEO of preparations for blast in U.S. mess tent that killed 22, shown on Ansar al-Sunna web site.

13. SAUDI ARABIA Al Qaeda attack on U.S. Consulate not as successful as planned. Four of terrorists killed are identified by police as al Qaeda supporters. Saudi Interior Ministry also attacked, with 10 terrorists dead.

14. PAKISTAN DRUG Trafficking from number-one drug source, neighboring Afghanistan, and local drug production, creates millions of addicts. As the number one victim of the drug trade, Pakistan is largest user of heroin, according to the Human Development Foundation.

9. INDIA MAOIST REBELS attack police monitoring rallies. Government in negotiations with rebels. Rebels see negotiations as a sign of weakness.

10. NEPAL BLOODY revolution by Moaist rebels intensifies before January 13 deadline set by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba for the Maoists to resume peace talks. More than 10,000 killed in civil war.

11. BANGLADESH BANGLADESHI immigrant arrested with 13 others, some members of the Mara Salvatruchas gang with suspected links to al-Qaeda.

PO1 Jason Murphy, a gunner in an MH-68 Stingray helicopter from the Helicopter Interdiction Squadron from Jacksonville, Fla., patrols a drug transit zone along side the Coast Guard cutter Gallatin *from Charleston, S.C.*

NEW FRONTIER

Cutting-Edge Narcs Guarantee No Safe Waters for Smugglers

TEXT & PHOTOS BY PA2 DONNIE BRZUSKA,
USCG ATLANTIC AREA COMMAND

Deep in the heart of the Caribbean Sea, the Coast Guard Cutter *Gallatin*, tasked as part of a cutting-edge counter-narcotics operation, steamed toward a suspected drug-smuggling boat. Overhead, a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) P-3 Orion had spotted the vessel leaving Colombian waters only a few hours earlier. The *Gallatin* crew maneuvered within range to launch their armed, MH-68 Stingray helicopter before the ICE aircraft ran low on fuel and was forced to leave the scene.

This cutting-edge broadside in the war on drugs is called *New Frontier*. Starting as a secret military project in 1998, Operation New Frontier has morphed into an integration of forces comprising an armed helicopter from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron; an ultra-fast, maneuverable small boat know as an over-the-horizon boat; and a Coast Guard cutter, such as the *Gallatin*, acting as a base and control center for all operations. Together, they are one of the most effective hunter-killer teams in the war on drugs.

As the *Gallatin* crew worked feverishly to launch their armed MH-68 Stingray helicopter, the drug runners pushed their boat as fast as it would go in an attempt to avoid capture. If the *Gallatin* or ICE lost sight of the go-fast, for even a few minutes, the suspected smugglers could run their boat aground on one of the small nearby islands and possibly escape.

Gotcha!

As the Stingray helicopter came alongside the go-fast, the gunner put his M240 machine gun out the door and fired 50 warning shots in the go-fast's path. The suspected smugglers ran their 40-foot boat right through the wall of water the warning shots created. The gunner grabbed his .50-caliber precision sniper rifle to shoot out the go-fast's engines. After 20 shots into the outboard engines, the vessel sat hopelessly dead in the water.

In only a few minutes, an armed law-enforcement boarding team from the *Gallatin* approached the foundering go-fast in their high-speed over-the-horizon small boat,

(below) Petty Officer 1st Class Jason Murphy stares down the sight of his .50-caliber precision rifle only hours after using the same weapon to shoot out the engines of a fleeing go fast. (below, right) Petty Officer 2nd Class Gavino Ortiz, Petty Officer 2nd Class Tim Manske, and Petty Officer 2nd Class Rodney Starling on the bow of a high-speed Over-the-Horizon small boat approach with guns drawn a smuggling go-fast boat with 58 bales of cocaine and four suspected smugglers on board.

(above) Petty Officer 2nd Class Tim Manske provides cover as Petty Officer 2nd Class Rodney Starling moves to hand cuff four suspected smugglers on a 40-foot smuggling go fast laden with 4,400 pounds of cocaine. (inset) Manske questions two suspected smugglers while an armed Coast Guard helicopter that stopped the go fast with a precision .50-caliber rifle patrols in the background.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Tim Manske cuffs a suspected smuggler on a go-fast laden with 4,400 pounds of cocaine.

with their guns drawn. The boarding team found some 4,000 pounds of cocaine in the cargo hold of the go-fast, and detained the four men onboard.

This was the second 4,000-pound go-fast cocaine seizure the *Gallatin* had snared in less than a week — which would have been almost unheard of before Operation New Frontier.

With unparalleled success, the operation has led to the seizure of more than 52,000 pounds of illegal narcotics in fiscal year 2004 alone: Operation New Frontier has led to the seizure of approximately 155 tons of illegal narcotics since its inception.

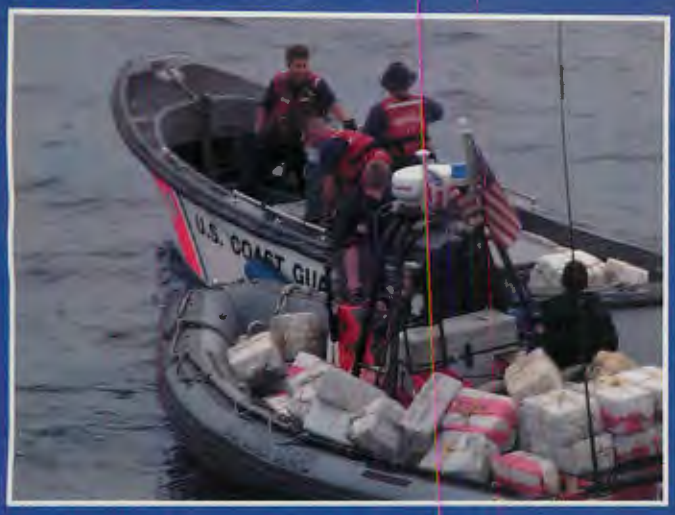
The threat of the go-fast, a 30- to 40-foot boat capable of speeds in excess of 60 knots, became apparent in the late 1990s as Coast Guard crews watched helplessly as drug smugglers transited the Caribbean Sea and the Eastern Pacific with ease. The Coast Guard estimated it was only stopping 10% of the illegal narcotics being shipped through those areas. The commandant of the Coast Guard at the time, Adm. James Loy, issued an order to find a way to stop the smugglers from infiltrating America in their high-speed boats.

Lean And Mean

With a limited budget, the idea of the Coast Guard buying new ships was out of the question. Several ideas were proposed, but one offered the most promise: Integrate an armed helicopter, capable of shooting out the engines of a fleeing go-fast, with a high-speed rigid-hull inflatable boat that can provide rapid surface support to the helicopter, while a cutter uses its arsenal of communication and control equipment to direct all assets at the scene.

After only a few trial runs in 1998, the operation proved to

The Coast Guard Cutter Gallatin's *high-speed Over-the-Horizon small boat patrols a drug transit zone in the Caribbean Sea.*



(above, left) Coast Guard crews transfered an estimated two tons of cocaine from a suspect drug smuggling vessel. (left) Nearly two tons of cocaine with a street value worth $34,000,000. (above) A smuggling go fast burns after it is destroyed by the crew of the Coast Guard's Gallatin *as a hazard to navigation.*

be wildly successful. Every go-fast encountered by the integration of forces of Operation New Frontier had been stopped.

"This 100% success rate represented a dramatic increase in go-fast seizures, and it set the stage for enhanced future maritime drug interdiction efforts," said Lt. Cmdr. Joe LeCato, assistant chief of the drug and migrant interdiction division at Coast Guard Headquarters' office of law enforcement.

A boarding team from the Coast Guard Cutter Gallatin from Charleston, S.C., look for evidence on board a sinking go fast.

The future of maritime drug interdiction is now a reality for the Coast Guard. The Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron was commissioned in 2002 with six armed Stingray helicopters. There are currently 17 cutters armed with high-speed over-the-horizon boats rotating through continuous deployments in the Caribbean Sea, with embarked Stingray helicopters onboard.

Many who work in the operation attribute its success to the well-oiled integration of all the forces involved.

"It's a team effort from the time the go-fast is first sighted until we hand them over to our counterparts in the Justice Department," said Lt. Derek R. Thorsrud, a Stingray pilot.

The Stingray stops the vessel, but it's the boat crew that must detain any suspects, seize any contraband, and prevent the suspects from scuttling any evidence or destroying the go-fast.

The cutter involved can be credited with providing a mission and logistical base for both the over-the-horizon boat and the Stingray helicopter. The cutter also plays an important role in funneling, directing and deciphering intelligence that is coming in from the Seventh Coast Guard District in Miami, and Joint Integrated Task Force

Continued on page 77

Humvee with a combination of armored doors.(below) Armored maintenance truck. Note the improvised gun turret on the roof and the blast plating on the driver's door.

A U.S. Soldier and civilian up-armor a vehicle in Kuwait. More than 6,000 factory-produced up-armored Humvees are in the U.S. Central Command area of operations. Of the other Humvees there, roughly 80 percent — or about 10,500 — have been armored. Photo: U.S. Army

The streets of Baghdad these days are reminiscent of Clint Eastwood's *The Gauntlet,* or Mel Gibson's *Mad Max.* But the superheroes of Baghdad are not the Hollywood types. They are American troops who, with creativity and hard work, have created driving machines with armor that the Pentagon has been either too short-sighted or too stingy to provide. This armor is handcrafted from scrounged steel and welded into protective plates on the various vehicles that make the daily and precarious maneuvers through the most dangerous city in the world. While the military may call this "improvised equipment," the soldiers have given it a more fitting name: "Hillbilly Armor."

Military equipment and vehicles are designed to meet anticipated needs consistent with the doctrine and planning of our military forces. Operation n Iraqi Freedom was to have been a fast and mobile war. Transport trucks and unarmored personnel carriers such as the Humvee were expected to operate in the rear echelon and seldom forward of what used to be known as the FEBA (Forward Edge of the Battle Area). These vehicles were not made for the kind of warfare now seen in Iraq.

HILLBILLY ARMOR

Mad Max and the Mother of All Inventions

TEXT & PHOTOS BY DEVON BENSON

(Inset) Contractors as well weld up what they can, such as this improvised gun tub for an M240 in the back of a Ford crew-cab. Finished out and painted, the hillbilly units are taken to the range for proving.

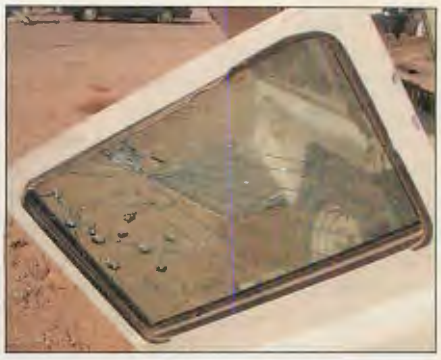
During the first Gulf War and during the invasion stage of the second Gulf War, these vehicles proved their worth. While used within their parameters, they were safe and efficient. But on the streets of Baghdad, they are considered a death trap by the men who are required to use them beyond their design limitations. This feeling is evident by the theatre-wide creation of makeshift armor for these vehicles. Almost every Humvee in Iraq has some sort of makeshift armor added to it. Until properly designed armored vehicles are available for our soldiers, the process will continue.

Donald Rumsfeld was asked about the issue of armor in a meeting with soldiers. His response was that they had what they needed to do the job. He said they would receive better equipment in the future. But as soldiers welded scrap steel into hillbilly armor, Rumsfeld drove away in an armored car that is unavailable to the soldiers in Iraq. To be more accurate, it would be unavailable to U.S. *GIs* in Iraq, but true armored cars are widely available to the various private contract forces employed in Iraq.

Ingenious GIs take steel from wherever they can find it. Then, with the help of motor-pool personnel and the squad responsible for the vehicle, they cut and weld pieces of steel to custom fabricate ad hoc armor for their vehicle. The process takes time that is not always available to the troops in the field. As I investigated the story, I found many Humvees with armor cut-outs sitting on the floor, waiting to be mounted. For troops who do not have the steel or the time to fabricate it, flack vests are strung up to the rear of the vehicle with parachute cord. While flack vests are effective

This is a Humvee with both aftermarket armor and hillbilly armor. The doors are aftermarket equipment. Also notice an aftermarket armor panel has been bolted below the rear door, but not above the tire. Basic steel plating has been welded to protect soldiers in the rear of the Humvee. (above) This Humvee has an aftermarket door and a thin steel protective armor in the back that would probably not stop most small arms fire.

This shows the thickness of an armored window on an armored Volvo. However, despite the thickness of the window, the car does not have the appearance of an armored car. This car is used by one of the security companies in Iraq.



"Hillbilly armor" on a security vehicle in Baji, Iraq: While some armor plating is placed on the vehicle, the driver said he did not think it would withstand a close range, direct shot at the armor. This photo also shows the many gaps in between armor panels, easily breached by bullets and shell fragments. (right) Just because a vehicle is armored does not mean it is unbeatable.

against shrapnel, most of the vests are not capable of stopping the standard 7.62x39 AK-47 round.

Whatever Works

Some vehicles have all doors made of hillbilly armor. Other vehicles have a combination of after-market armored doors and hillbilly armor. One Humvee had an armored door from a previously destroyed Humvee, however the armored window was missing and left a large opening to the occupants. The various stages of armor for each vehicle suggests that despite the government position that soldiers do not have to scrounge for equipment, this may be an optimistic assessment. It suggests that each soldier is responsible for turning his vehicle into an armored vehicle. It suggests that our GIs are working around the reality that they are on their own.

In response to the obvious, but poorly anticipated, need, the military has been providing after-market armor. This consists of armored plating that is bolted to the body of the vehicle and armored doors that replace the standard doors. While this armor is finding its way to the men in Iraq, it is still slow to arrive. Furthermore, troops say it replaces one problem with another.

Soldiers state that a Humvee that is designed as an armored vehicle performs differently than a vehicle that was not designed to carry the weight of the armor. The increased weight of the armor is damaging the suspension systems and reducing the capability of the vehicle. Factory-built armored Humvees come with a stronger suspension system and other modifications to ensure the vehicle can continue to operate within its design parameters. According to troops in the field, the modified Humvees are more susceptible to damage and vehicle failure. There have also been complaints of premature transmission failures.

Vehicle breakdowns in the world's most dangerous country are an invitation to a funeral. Troops are reluctant to operate these vehicles in such an environs. Even if their armor makes the vehicle safer from small arms fire and shell fragments, the modifications make the vehicle more susceptible to failure — and many troops who are daily putting their life on the line believe they deserve better equipment and more consideration from their government.

Haves and Have-Nots

Most of the contract operators employed with the many security companies in Iraq have armored vehicles. While some of the security companies will also utilize "Hillbilly armor,"

This is an armored Volvo that does not have the armored look about it. However, it does not have gun ports and passengers cannot engage attackers without lowering the armored windows.

Another armored SUV in Baghdad. It is has run-flat tires, gun ports and a killer stereo.

This dump truck looks like it should be driven by Mel Gibson. Note the unusual armor plating for the windshield and basic cut-out for the door and gap between the bed of the truck and the cab. Armor plating also covers the fuel tank and much of the truck bed.

most of these companies utilize factory-made armored vehicles with run-flat tires. Many of these vehicles have gun ports in the doors and some even electronic smoke generators. While most of these vehicles are still susceptible to being destroyed by an IED, it is not uncommon for the occupants to survive the incident. In the green zone, as convoys pull out to drive through Baghdad, the soldiers drive past a parking lot full of armored cars. It seems that real armor is saved for brass like Rumsfeld or for contractors who would not fight if they were not given the proper equipment to fight with.

In the privatized military of security companies throughout Iraq, by and large, their operators are provided with the best equipment money can buy. They have the best armor, the best vehicles and the best salaries. If their employer decides that their personnel do not need armor or other safety items, the soldiers can quit (as occurred in May 2004 with the Steele Foundation where 50% of their soldiers quit.

But U.S. soldiers and Marines do not have that option. They cannot quit. If this were a private operation, all these vehicles would be armored or the contract for services would be not have been accepted. With all the funding in the United States, it is unreasonable to expect that the Pentagon cannot provide the equipment necessary to make the hazardous job of our troops as safe as possible? If it is true that we have the needed funds, then perhaps the bean counters in

This is an armored transport truck. Note that the armor has been bolted to the exterior of the vehicle.

Near Fallujah, Marine Metal Workers Weld Life-Saving Vehicle Armor

TEXT & PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. JIM GOODWIN, USMC

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — Standing on top of a Humvee, blowtorch in hand in the middle of Iraq, Cpl. Ray C. Rollins contemplates why he joined the Marine Corps nearly four years ago.

Putting down the blowtorch he was using to weld a steel plate to the backside of the truck, he smiles and gives his reply: "I was told I couldn't make it in the Marine Corps," he said. "I hate being told I can't do something, so I did it just to prove I could."

The 23-year-old Marine reservist from Dublin, Texas, is a welder by trade back in the civilian sector for a local company called Welder Riggs Machine and Welding.

In the Marine Corps, he is a mechanic, but often can be found crossing the short distance of gravel which separates his work area from the two tents which house the welders' work area. He loves welding, he says, and frequently stops by to see if his fellow Marines have any welding work he can help with.

The welders are part of Combat Service Support Company 122, a unit that provides vehicle recovery and maintenance services for Marine units operating throughout western Iraq.

Since arriving in Iraq with the rest of CSSC-122 in September, Rollins' skills have come to particularly good use. CSSC-122's welders — six Marines in all — worked around the clock to weld armor on more than 115 military vehicles used for convoys and patrols during the height of Fallujah combat operations.

Using both pre-fabricated kits of armor and scrap metal from inoperable vehicles, these Marines have welded extra armor onto doors, back panels, gun mounts, and undersides of everything from trucks to bulldozers to help pro-

Marine Sgt. David M. Liske, a metal worker with Combat Service Support Company 122, carries an old Humvee door he'll weld to another Humvee for additional armor.

Washington need to expedite the fielding of appropriate equipment.

American ingenuity and troop initiative are creating ad hoc armor from scrap metal in Iraq. Units deploying are spending unit funds in the United States to buy better body armor and other needed equipment before they deploy to Iraq. Isn't it enough to ask a soldier to risk his life in a war? Do we really need to have him buy his own armor? If we throw a solider into the fray as an instrument of national policy, is it not the most cost effective to send him with the best equipment for the best chance of survival?

A frequent contributor to SOF, *Devin Benson filed this report from Baghdad.*

This transport truck has also been fitted with some armor. Note the green-colored blast plating behind the door. This device provides a different thermal image and allows for easier identification of friendly forces during night operations. One rumor is that the Iraqis believed that this was a device that used an electromagnetic force to disrupt RPG rounds. According to the rumor, PsyOps got word of the Iraqi belief and worked to make it a believable story. The result (if the rumor is to be believed) was that the Iraqis modified much of their RPG ammo. The RPG rounds then flew poorly and did not hit the target and consequently increased the belief that this new armor was affecting the flight path of the RPG rounds. Far fetched? Remember, this is Iraq. (right) This heavy truck and the other trucks in the motorpool have all been fitted with armor on the doors.

tect Marines operating inside the "City of Mosques."

"We're the guys who protect the rifle carriers and make sure they come home to their families," said Sgt. David M. Liske, the welding shop's noncommissioned officer in charge. "They want to come home to their families just like the rest of us."

From a distance, Liske's Marines could be mistaken for a crew of mechanics in an automobile shop in "Anywhere, U.S.A." Instead of the tan and brown digital camouflage uniforms most Marines wear, these Marines don dirty, faded coveralls and boots sprinkled with random burn marks, a trademark of their welding operations. Tools line the racks inside one of two tents the Marine welders use as a workshop. Country music echoes throughout the tent

"Hell, I've been through quite a few coveralls and boots," said Liske, who serves as a full-time firefighter back in Rock Island, Ill., when he's not serving in Iraq. "It comes with the job."

Lance Cpl. Adam L. Schroeder cuts a sheet of metal, which will be used to up-armor a Humvee.

"How many coveralls you been through?" Liske asks one of his metal workers, Lance Cpl. Adam L. Schroeder, a 20-year-old Plattville, Wis., native.

Placing a piece of a Humvee engine on one of the workshop's tables, Schroeder takes the cigarette he's smoking out of his mouth to answer: "At least five or six," he said.

Welders they may be, but they are Marines first. As they are working, a Marine from a nearby shop calls out to Liske, "Man the berms!"

Upon hearing these three words, the Marines put down their tools, extinguish their cigarettes, put on their helmets and body armor, grab their rifles and hustle to pre-staged fighting positions along the fenced-in perimeter which separates CSSC-122's lot from the outside world.

Although insurgents are not attacking the base, the combat drill keeps the Marines alert and ready for action in the event of an impending attack. Just several days before Christmas, an explosion inside at a dining facility at a U.S. military base in Camp in Mosul killed more than 20 people.

"It's a reminder we're still in a war," said Liske, 34.

Like many reserve Marines throughout the United States, Liske was activated and served during the initial phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom last year. A 15-year veteran of the Marines, he originally signed up to serve within the crash, fire and rescue field of the Marine Corps, putting his fireman skills to use in the military. However, according to Liske, a mistake on his recruiter's part put him on the path to becoming a metal worker following boot camp, a mistake he says he's glad was made, in retrospect.

"Instead of putting out fires, they've got me building them," he said, leaning on the hood of a Humvee currently being outfitted with additional armor plating for CSSC-122's sister company, CSSC-115.

While armored vehicles have been a recent concern for some U.S. servicemembers serving in the Global War on Terrorism, it has not been a large concern for Marines here. CSSC-122's welders were putting armor on vehicles up to an hour before Marine infantry units invaded Fallujah on Nov. 8, ensuring Marines didn't face the city's dangers,

such as improvised explosive devices and enemy small arms fire, unprotected.

Lance Cpl. Able G. Rodriguez, a 29-year-old military policeman with Combat Service Support Battalion 1's MP detachment here, is certainly thankful for the armor he had on his Humvee during a vehicle recovery mission Nov. 7, 2004 - the day before Operation Al Fajr began.

The MPs provide security for convoys and vehicle recovery missions outside the base, and have experienced their fair share of attacks by insurgents. Rodriguez was manning a .50-caliber machine gun when he and the other Marines' vehicles began receiving enemy rifle fire. Before the MPs could locate the insurgents and return fire, the shield plate mounted around Rodriguez' machine gun was hit by rifle fire at least four times, he said.

While the Marines' vehicles have armor to some degree, some units like to have their vehicles' armor up-graded for additional protection, especially when facing the unknown dangers of Iraq.

IEDs have been one of the deadliest threats to American servicemembers operating on Iraq's roadways. For the Marine truck drivers and military policemen of the various combat service support units that convoy supplies to Marines throughout Iraq, extra armor on vehicles can mean the difference between life and death on Iraq's roadways.

Without the armor on his machine gun mount Nov. 7, armor installed by CSSC-122, Rodriguez would not be standing here today, he said.

"They (enemy rounds) would have been dead on me," said the Brookshire, Texas, native. "You could hear the impacts of the rounds against the shield. Without that armor, the whole situation would have played out a lot differently."

In addition to welding armor, CSSC-122's welders have also constructed more than 140 "hedgehogs" - spiked barriers used to impede vehicle movement.

For the MPs, the welders cut hooked shards of metal, sharpened them, and welded them to a steel plate base - instant road spikes.

"They call us 'Fallujah's Monster Garage,'" said Schroeder.

The other Marines laugh at the comment.

"Yeah, we can make just about anything," said Liske, who admits the Marines have had to be creative when improvising armor plating and constructing various other tools to assist Marines' operating inside the city.

Using two large metal doors from a 7-ton truck, the Marines are currently constructing a back panel for the Humvee to provide additional rear protection for the driver and passenger. They are also adding sheet metal to both doors for additional protection against an attack from either side.

Lance Cpl. Juan F. Montellano, a 6-foot, 2-inch, Marine from Tucson, Ariz., and metal worker, is busy measuring and marking a piece of sheet metal which will later be cut into smaller pieces and used to help up-armor the Humvee.

Montellano recalled the long hours he and the other welders worked to ensure his fellow Marines in the city have protection on their vehicles, a task he is glad to have been a part of, he said. Montellano lost three close friends in Iraq, including his best friend from high school.

His father told him the news of his friend's death over the phone, said Montellano, a 21-year-old first-generation American who speaks with a slight Hispanic accent. When asked about his reaction to the news, Montellano, known as "Monty" to his fellow metal workers, pauses a moment with a sullen look on his face before answering.

"I was angry at the insurgents. I wanted to go out there and kill them, but I got to stay focused," he said. "I'm here to make a difference. That's why I'm in (the Marine Corps.)"

Marine Sgt. David M. Liske and Lance Cpl. Juan F. Montellano, both metal workers with Combat Service Support Company 122, place a steel plate on a Humvee.

Though the Marine Corps has taught him to work well with others, Montellano plans on getting out of the Marine Corps after his four-year enlistment is over to pursue other interests. Lighting up another cigarette, he explains that he plans on attending an apprenticeship school to pursue welding full-time.

When he returns home from Iraq, he plans on going on a much-needed vacation with his wife, Suzette.

Like many Marines here, Montellano tries not to dwell on the future too much, but rather stay focused on the task at hand-serving his time in Iraq, an experience which he has forged new friendships as well as steel plates on the back of Humvees.

"We're brothers here," he said, speaking with the same conviction he uses when speaking about his wife and daughter back home at Camp Pendleton, Calif. "Stick close, and if you have a problem, let me know. I'll take care of you. That's the way it is out here."

As Schroeder and Rollins continue to fuse steel plates to the CSSC-115 Humvee, two U.S. soldiers drive up in a tan-colored Humvee. They talk to Liske about making an addition to their Humvee.

"They want armor, we give 'em armor," said Liske. "You hear about a vehicle being attacked by an IED, and then you hear that the armor saved three guys in the back of the vehicle. As long as these guys come back alive, that's gratification enough for us."

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SOF Salutes Hannibal 2

Widely reported to be some of the toughest, hardest-working leathernecks in their AO are these studs from 1st Marine Division, Headquarters Battalion, H&S Company, Infantry Platoon, who go by the moniker of HANNIBAL 2. *Top, left to right: Lcpl Beard, Lcpl Boudreaux, Cpl Courtois, Lcpl McAnulty, Lcpl Douchein, Lcpl Feske. Bottom, left to right: Sgt Williams, Cpl Bernard, Sgt Boyd, Sgt Guillory, Lcpl Hall, Lcpl Hoggatt, down in front is Lcpl Schiff. Hannibal 2 conducts combat foot patrols in the Ar Ramadi area, conducts recon and surveillance missions (R&S), and also is tasked with PSD (personal security detail) Convoys for high-tier personnel traveling into downtown Ar Ramadi, Fallujah, and Baghdad. Hannibal 2 comprises infantry Marines from various units that were pulled together to run combat operations for the Battalion. Within the last three months they successfully conducted more than 50 combat foot patrols, uncovered several weapons caches, numerous R&S missions, and more than 30 PSD convoys.* Photo: courtesy Cpl Brian Bernard, USMC

1st FSSG Marines Brave Western Iraq's Roads To Deliver The Goods

BY LANCE CPL. TRAVIS J. KAEMMERER

CAMP AL ASAD, Iraq — While some Marines are combating threats in the insurgent-ridden streets of Fallujah and Ramadi, Marines here are braving Iraq's roadways to provide essential supplies to forward operating bases in western Iraq.

Marines with the 1st Force Service Support Group travel daily to deliver everything from food and water to mail and supplemental items, such as magazines, cigarettes, even alarm clocks and sodas.

The responsibility of delivering these supplies — one of two ways for Marines in remote areas in western Iraq to receive these provisions — lies in the hands of 1st FSSG's Combat Service Support Company 119.

Since arriving here in August, CSSC-119 Marines have logged in nearly 170,000 miles of road time and put in an average of 90 hours a week to get the job done. This translates into a workload which often times leaves little more than 10 hours a day to eat, shower, relax, and sleep, before it's time to hit the road and do it all over again.

The Marines here know that if they don't do their job, then the Marines with 1st Marine Division won't be able to do theirs, said 1st Lt. Chris J. Lefebvre, CSSC-119's executive officer.

"They haven't failed yet," he said.

Although the Marines here have not encountered as many improvised explosive devices as units further east — luckily none with dire results - the threat of enemy contact, along with the dangers associated with CSSC-119's fast-paced operations, is always there, said Lefebvre.

"Marines are going out there and facing the threats that come with convoys — the heat, the distance — it's incredible," said Lefebvre, a 25-year-old native of Hollywood, Md.

The Mission — 500 Miles Away

Recently, 2nd Platoon, one of two CSSC-119 sub-units responsible for conducting convoys, was tasked with making a supply convoy to Camp Korean Village, a nearly 500 mile drive, round-trip.

The two-day trek is the longest of six regular convoys CSSC-119 is tasked to make.

At 7 a.m. on Oct. 21, 2004, the Marines of 2nd Platoon muster behind the gates of CSSC-119's motor pool, where the dozen or so military and civilian trucks are staged. They load their personal items, such as hygiene gear, clothing, food and water onto their individual vehicles. They check the air pressure and fuel levels of their vehicles. They mount the heavy machine guns, grenade launchers and other weapons used to provide security against any possible enemy threats during the trip.

An hour later, 1st Lt. Marykitt Haugen, convoy commander, conducts role call and gives a pre-convoy brief to the Marines regarding the planned convoy route, road safety precautions, radio call signs, and convoy procedures.

A chaplain gives a group prayer for the Marine's safety. The Marines "mount up" in their vehicles, and begin the long haul. Like a line of railroad cars tagging behind an engine, the convoys' larger vehicles follow several High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles, or "Hum-vees," mounted with crew-served machine guns for security.

photos: Lance Cpl. Travis J. Kaemmerer

(left) Several Navy corpsmen, Marines, and a Navy Chaplain tend to one of two Marines injured when the seven-ton truck they were driving overturned during a supply convoy to Camp Korean Village in western Iraq, 20 Oct. 2004. (above) Like a string of railcars moving along a railroad, military and civilian truck drivers with 2nd platoon, Combat Service Support Company 119, 1st Force Service Support Group, convoy supplies from Al Asad to the forward operating base, Camp Korean Village.

Staff Sgt. Jim Goodwin

Marines with 2nd Platoon, Combat Service Support Company 119, 1st Force Service Support Group, clean their machine guns following a two-day supply convoy to forward operating base, Camp Korean Village, Oct. 21-22, 2004. The Marines utilize machine guns, automatic grenade launchers, rifles and pistols to provide security for their convoys.

Complacency Kills

"They say complacency kills, and I dig that," said Lance Cpl. Brennan M. Rahmaan of Little Rock, Ark., one of the convoy's drivers.

Working on the third month of his second tour of duty in Iraq, Rahmaan, along with the other handful of Marines who are serving their second tour in the desert, have proven to be an invaluable source of experience for the CSSC-119, said Haugen.

Following major combat operations last year, Rahmaan, 27, ran convoys from Kuwait to Baghdad, often times serving as the convoy commander, a responsibility usually given to Marine officers or staff noncommissioned officers.

"Those guys (Marines on their second tour of duty in Iraq) are huge for us because we have a lot of kids here with not much experience," said Haugen, a 23-year-old native of Gillette, Wyo. "There are no words for how much they are worth."

The key to a successful convoy mission is staying alert at all times, and not allowing the often mundane drive to detract from situational awareness, said Rahmaan, 27.

"This is your life here," said Rahmaan. "If I slip and don't see something, that truck three or four back could get messed up. Later, I could be thinking, 'Man, I could have prevented that.'"

Rahmaan, who joined the Marine Corps three years ago to "get off the streets" of his hometown, can't emphasize enough to his fellow Marines: complacency kills.

During the pre-convoy brief, Haugen reiterated to her Marines the need for total awareness on the road: "This is a danger area, keep your dispersion," she said, pointing to a specific roadway on the map of the Camp Korean Village convoy route. "Stay alert."

A Dangerous Job On Dangerous Roads

Within 10 miles of the departure point, the convoy encounters their first unforeseen obstacle in the trip: a seven-ton truck carrying large containers of water has overturned onto the side of the road. When the truck's central tire inflation system malfunctioned, the rustle of the thousands of gallons of water it was hauling caused the truck to shift off the road and flip over, throwing the Marine manning the machine gun from the turret.

The truck is completely upside down in the sand. Many on the scene speculated that if the truck had flipped one more time, it may very well have crushed the Marine who was thrown from the truck's machine gun turret.

During the entire evolution, Marines armed with M16 service rifles surround the scene to provide security for the Navy corpsmen tending to the accident's victims. Haugen calls in for a helicopter medical evacuation.

"Some things you just can't prevent," Rahmaan said, rattled after his friend was flown away. "When we first got here (on the accident scene) we had to make sure the Marines were safe. They're alive. After that, push on. Focus on the mission."

The Marines don't leave anyone, or anything, behind.

"It's the unexpected breakdowns that equal more time outside the wire," said Rahmaan. "A three hour convoy can turn into a 10 hour convoy."

Back on the road, the drive is quiet for many miles. The only sounds are the dull roar of vehicle engines and the quiet hum of radio traffic. After two hours of driving, the monotony of the road starts setting in. Backs and knees

Continued on page 58

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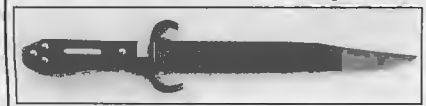

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Marines Deliver Goods

Continued from page 54

begin to ache, but the mission is underway and the Marines continue to drive on as the sun begins to set.

"The knees just ain't what they used to be," Rahmaan hollered to a fellow Marine when the convoy took an all-too-quick break to stretch their legs and repair wiring on one of the trucks.

The convoy arrives at Camp Korean Village around 8 p.m. The Marines stage the trucks in a dirt parking lot and turn off their lights for the night.

An hour later, with the vehicles parked in an orderly fashion, Staff Sgt. Rodney Garcia, the assistant convoy commander, gathers the troops for an evening brief on the first half of the convoy. He informs them that their injured comrades from earlier in the day are all right. One suffered a minor shoulder injury. The other had a bruised hip and fractured wrist.

"Say a prayer for them for a quick recovery," the 30-year-old Del Norte, Colo., native said.

The Marines set up camp with the trucks in the parking lot. They slept on cots in the sand next to their vehicles.

Mission Complete, On The Road Again

At 5 a.m., the Marines are awaken boot camp fashion – another Marine shouting "Reveille!" several times until all are awake.

It's still dark when they awake, and they get dressed and take care of their personal hygiene in the dark. As the sun begins to rise and shed light on the camp, they set to work – four hours of unloading the supplies off their trucks.

By the end of their task, the Marines of 2nd Platoon have re-supplied Camp Korean Village with everything the Marines operating there need.

"The convoys are the most cost effective means of re-supply for us out here," said 3rd Light Armor Reconnaissance Battalion's Sgt. Maj., Leland W. Hatfield.

With their mission of delivering the supplies complete, the Marines start the nearly 250 mile trek back to Al Asad. Although the return trek proved to be uneventful, the Marines remain ever vigilant to ensure a safe return home.

"It gets monotonous, but we know our jobs are important in Iraq," said Haugen.

As the convoy of now-empty trucks passes through Camp Korean Village's sandbag and concertina wire-laden gate, a large wooden sign in plain view leaves a final stenciled reminder to those leaving the protection of the Marine camp — "Complacency kills."

Hours later, 2nd Platoon passes through Camp Al Asad's gates. The convoy makes its way through the roads here until it reaches its starting point: CSSC-119's motor pool.

After unloading their helmets, protective vests, weapons and personal items from their vehicles, the Marines clean and gas up each vehicle in preparation for the next convoy, which begins the next morning at 7 a.m.

"The Marines are doing this day in, day out, no questions asked," said Lefebvre. "They continue to amaze our leadership daily."

After mustering 2nd Platoon again, Haugen and Garcia take role call a final time and dismiss the Marines.

Signs of exhaustion from the past 34 hours' activities, apparent during the long drive back from Camp Korean Village, begin to fade from the Marines' faces as they realize they are now officially "off work," or on "liberty," as the Marines call it.

That is at least until the next day — and the next convoy — begins.

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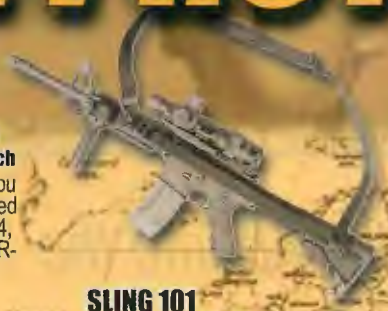

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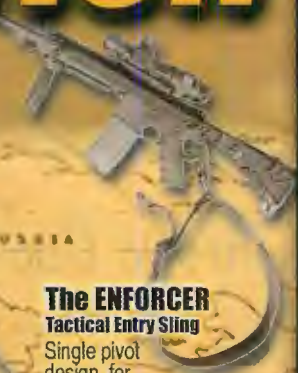

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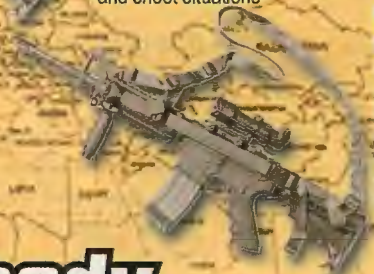

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THE KREBS KTR-03S

Krebs Custom takes the AK into the 21st Century!

TEXT & PHOTOS BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

One of the most prolific firearms in history, Mikhail Timofeevich Kalashnikov's *Avtomat Kalashnikova* – 1947, or AK-47, is also one of the most successful. The reason for this is simple. This more than half-century-old system works!

Operating on the long-stroke gas piston principle, the AK (as it is commonly known) reduces parts by having its bolt carrier semi-permanently attached to the long arm of its gas piston, similar to, but shorter than that of the M1 Garand. This arrangement also increases reliability by adding weight, and therefore kinetic energy, to the bolt group.

Instead of riding directly on rails within the stamped (pressed) sheet-metal receiver, the bolt carrier depends more on its recoil-spring guide-rod. Located at the top of the carrier, this rod allows the carrier's bottom side rails to enjoy a relatively loose relationship with corresponding ones on both sides of the receiver. This design allows the AK to operate under extreme conditions of SGD (s—t, grit and debris).

Riding within the bolt carrier, the AK's two-lug rotating bolt works very much like that of the M1 Garand, but it shares more of a "shirt tail" relationship with the M1. This is because it's bolt and carrier arrangement is actually a simplified copy of that of the ZK-420S, a Czechoslovakian rifle that was first developed prior to World War II, and which itself incorporated a number of features of the M1 and later, the M14 rifle.

The AK's charging handle is also similar to that of the M1 Garand, as is its hammer/sear system, but that is where such similarities end. From there, the AK takes a major leap of becoming a true assault rifle, being capable of full automatic fire, having a straight-line stock/barrel relationship and a sep-

courtesy Krebs Custom Guns

Viewed from the right side, the KTR-03S has its Krinkov stock extended with a 30-round AK magazine inserted and an Aimpoint Comp ML Red Dot Reflex Sight mounted on its top cover M1913 rail. (inset, top) In this close-up of the left side, left side Galil-style selector can be clearly seen. The rifle also comes with the standard side-rail mount that can serve other uses. (inset, above) From the right side, this close-up shows the stock latch at the rear of the receiver and the special AR-15 rear sight. (left) The Krebs Custom 1913 Rail Pistol Grip is durable and offers excellent heat insulation during extended strings of fire. The 10-degree offset offers improved ergonomics and the side-mounted feature facilitates magazine changes on AK-type weapon systems.

This close-up of the left side of the forward section of the KTR-03S illustrates the offset foregrip with its integral SureFire Tactical Light mounted. (below) The standard AK safety requires the shooter to remove the firing hand from the pistol grip to operate it. The Krebs Custom AK Enhanced Safety allows the shooter to manipulate the safety while maintaining the shooting hand in firing position.

KTR-03S
SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber:	7.62x39mm (M43).
Muzzle Velocity:	2400 fps.
Operation:	Long-stroke gas piston.
Type of Fire:	Semi-automatic only, or selective (LE only).
Barrel Length:	(semi) 16.25".
	(full) 13" standard.
Overall Length:	(semi) 34".
	(full) 31" extended, 21.5 with Krinkov folded.
	Note: Lengths with new Vltor ModStock not yet known.
Weight:	7 pounds.
Finish:	Matte black.
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courtesy Krebs Custom Guns

arate pistol grip — features that were copied from the WW II German StG-44, a weapon that the Soviets got a nasty taste of along the Eastern Front. One additional feature found on the AK was an ambidextrous magazine release such as was popular on magazine-fed light machine guns at the time, and which has been used on a great many arms since.

The 7.62x39mm

Of course, one cannot forget the intermediate assault rifle cartridge used in the AK. In fact, one could almost say "introduced" with the rifle, as while the 7.62x39mm (M43) cartridge made its debut four years earlier in the Soviet SKS, that rifle/cartridge combination saw relatively limited service before the war ended.

Just how the Soviets made the quantum leap from the relatively primitive 7.62x54R cartridge to the ultra modern 7.62x39mm remains a mystery. It is well documented that Soviet spies acquired secret drawings of new intermediate cartridge designs from the German Polte factory just before WW II. Tested in 7mm and other calibers, a copy of a drawing of one of these rounds even indicates a case length of 39.5mm and illustrates a case shape and rim much like the 7.62x39mm. It is known that the Germans decided to retain the case head and caliber of the 7.92x57mm rifle round in the shortened 7.92x33mm they used in the StG-44. It is also known that the Soviets did much the same thing in retaining the 7.62mm caliber they were tooled up to produce, when they created the 7.62x39mm cartridge, but the whole story has yet to unfold.

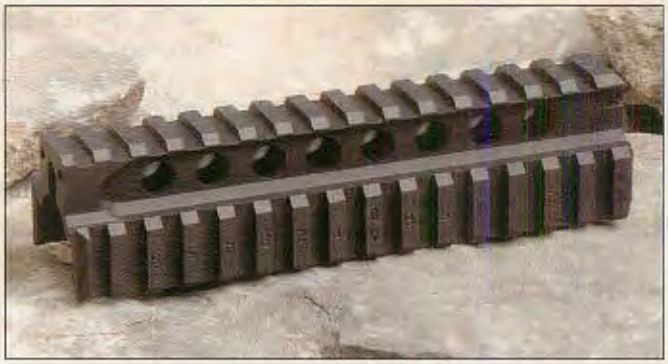
Whatever the case, one could say that the AK had it all back in 1947, and, for an assault rifle it did, but the meter is always running and time gradually began to overtake the original AK. The system remained strong, but a number of features began to change. The Finns equipped their Valmet AK copy with better sights and stock furniture, and the Israelis took their Galil version even farther. With the end of the Cold War, free Eastern European countries that have used the AK for more than a half-century have also been free to make various upgrades to the system. Arms designers in the former Soviet Union have also made a great number of revolutionary/evolutionary changes to the basic AK, in a quest for world markets now open to them. Taking all these improvements into account from an American perspective is small arms designer and Class II manufacturer, Mark Krebs, of Krebs Custom Guns, in Wauconda, Illinois.

The 21st Century AK

With a complete understanding of all aspects of the AK, Mark Krebs has designed and built an American version the likes of which few have never dreamed. Recently I was introduced to Mark Krebs by my friend and noted firearms writer, David Fortier, at the huge PASA Park Range in Illinois, and was privileged to evaluate a version of Mark's work. I say a "version," because by the time you read this, further innovations to the gun will be available as described further below.

Called the KTR-03S, Krebs' new 7.63x39mm carbine is based on the high quality, heavy-duty Russian Saiga AK

courtesy Krebs Custom Guns



An exact duplicate of the AK-74 muzzle brake, this is a 2-chambered brake that works to eliminate muzzle climb. The adaptor fits the muzzle brake to your barrel.

The 1913 Rail Fore-End is designed to fit both stamped and machined receiver Kalashnikov rifles and be a direct replacement for the lower hand guard, with no gunsmithing needed.

receiver and match-quality 7.62x39mm barrel with the following features:

- Two-stage trigger.
- Front sight/gas block using an AR-15 front sight post.
- AR-15 rear sight w/integral M1913 rail (providing 64% more sight radius than standard AK)
- Left-side Galil-style thumb safety.
- U.S. M249 SAW-style pistol grip.
- Three-position (3, 6 & 9o'clock) M1813 rail forend.

Before going on, let's take a closer look at these features. Affixed to the specially fitted top cover, the rear mounted AR-15 rear sight and M1913 rail require the complete elimination of the standard rear sight and its base from the barrel. This change, especially with a true M1913-spec rail, is a major step in providing the AK with 21st Century capabilities using A.R.M.S. QD ThrowLever mounts and others. The sample Krebs KTR-03S we had at PASA Park was equipped with the superb Aimpoint Comp ML Red Dot Reflex Sight that is the #1 choice of the U.S. Special Forces. However, this top rail also allows mounting almost any optic desired, including most night-vision optics using special extender M1913 rails from Mounting Solutions Plus. On many rifles, these rails offer mounting solutions where there weren't any.

Designed and manufactured by Krebs Custom Guns, the Galil-type left-side thumb safety is of the absolute highest quality, as is the three-sided M1913 rail system that replaces the standard handguard system. The Krebs SAW-style pistol grip offers ergonomics far beyond that of the conventional AK grip. Now for the options.

Standard AK Accessories

For those who prefer merely a better standard rear sight, Krebs offers a custom tangent with a peep aperture of 3.9mm size. Krebs also offers 4130 hard-chrome-plated pistons for the AK-47, AK-74 and Krinkov, and an exact duplicate of the AK-74 muzzle brake in .22 and .30 caliber, along with adapters for many popular rifles. Krebs also makes a superb replacement safety lever/dust cover that does not require removal of one's shooting hand to take from the SAFE to FIRE positions. This is a perfect solution for your conventional AK-type rifle that does not have a Galil type selector.

More to the case in point, Krebs makes a unique offset forward pistol grip for its three-position rail system. Mounting on either the 3- or 9 o'clock rail, this vertical foregrip is offset to allow insertion and removal of the long, curved 30-round magazines that are now legal again (if only temporarily so). Also offered is a universal sling mount for use with this foregrip. If this grip doesn't sound clever enough, it is also machined to accept a SureFire Tactical Light that can be operated with the thumb using the standard end cap pressure switch, and the whole thing is 100% ambidextrous.

Did I forget to mention that Krebs' three-position rail will fit both stamped and machined AK receivers, and that it is a direct replacement for the standard handguards? Krebs also offers heat-resistant TangoDown Rail Grip panels to cover rails that are not being used to mount equipment. These neat panels are now available with a recessed groove to accept remote pressure switches for tactical lights. Of course, the Krebs rails will accept the smaller tactical pistol lights, such as the M3 types from Insight Technology and SureFire's new X200.

Although time and conditions did not permit taking the time to fire it for 100-yard accuracy, the early Krebs KTR-03S Carbine I got to play with was fitted with a standard Krinkov flash hider/muzzle brake and side-folding stock. This setup is easy enough to control in full automatic in standard Krinkov versions I have tested, not to mention with the addition of Krebs' vertical foregrip. However,

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there is even better news.

It Gets Better

After returning home, I learned of a new development that will be one of the subjects of another article soon to be featured in *SOF*. I quickly called Mark Krebs with my suggestion only to learn that he was way ahead of me. As you read this, the KTR-03S is available with the superb retractable Vltor ModStock system using a special 4-position tube with the dimensions of that on the M4 Carbine. However, since this tube houses no recoil spring system, it is a storage compartment. I might have guessed when I complained to Krebs about folding stocks on carbines at PASA Park. He just smiled and said that a better system was in the works. A brand new version of the ModStock is also available with a higher comb.

For a long time, folding stocks have been a real sore point with many others and me, but some manufacturers just can't seem to pull their heads from where the sun doesn't shine. Folding stocks are useful ONLY for storage. Retractable stocks offer adjustment for length of pull, especially where thick entry vests or winter clothing are worn, this in tandem with operators of different stature & etc. Krebs is a company now offering an inside track in an ultra modern AK, but here's the best news.

A KTR-03S Rifle

The selective fire, 13" barreled gun pictured is not available to the public and can only be purchased by law enforcement and government agencies. However, by the time this reaches you, Krebs will offer a version of its KTR-03S that law-abiding persons and individual law enforcement officers in most states can own with all but three of the features described above. Called the KTR-03S Rifle, this will be a semi-automatic ONLY version with a 16.25" barrel and will have a different muzzle piece. This may be a standard M16 flash hider, or a muzzle brake, but during the "sunset" the muzzle will be legally threaded. I was able to get most of the specifications for it.

The absolute reliability of the AK has brought it thus far in history. Krebs will take it the rest of the way. In fact, I'm so impressed with Mark Krebs' 21st Century AK, I think he should call it the AK-21. I think Mikhail Kalashnikov would approve. If your agency is looking for a really advanced selective-fire AK system, check out the KTR-03S. If you're a law enforcement officer looking for the "perfect" AK patrol carbine, or qualified law abiding citizen who wants the AK system of the future, contact Krebs Custom Guns, Dept. SOF, 1000 Rand Rd., Unit 106, Wauconda, IL 60084, (847) 487-7776 **krebscustom.com .**

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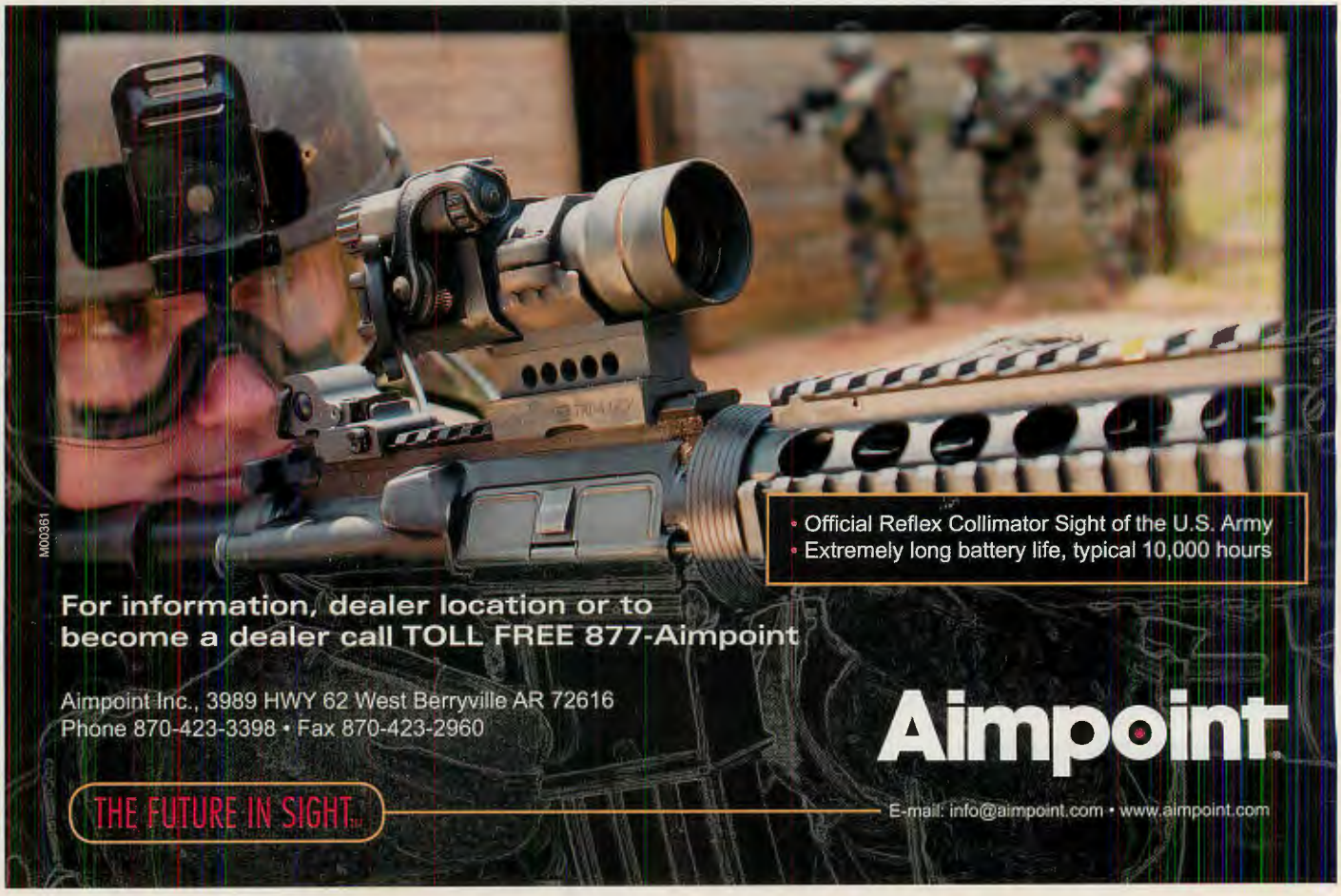
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Bad Place For A Cop

Continued from page 24

made of sections of chain link fence, all around it. From the looks of the building they hadn't gotten the screens up in time.

Carlos had told me a couple of days before that these lonely policemen in the middle of FARC country had orders to defend their stations "to the death."

"That's stupid." I said. "If it was me I'd have escape tunnels built, and the whole building wired to self-destruct when the enemy occupied it."

"Those are the orders," he replied.

"Made in an office in Bogota by somebody who won't have to carry them out."

"*Si.*"

Across the street in a vacant lot were some badly burned bulldozers, graders, and other construction equipment.

With Fredy translating the cops told the story of the station being surrounded, not by the FARC, but by the people of the town. In the attack, which I pictured as kind of like the mob scene in a Western, the construction equipment had been torched. But it was a protest, not an attack. Nobody tried to overrun the station, and the cops didn't shoot the townspeople. It was a Colombian standoff.

Police headquarters was spare, and not overly orderly. Like most Spanish-style buildings this one was built around a courtyard. It was pretty trashy. They hadn't had a police call in awhile and everything needed a paint job.

Two-Cell Jail

I mentioned this to Prieto, and he shrugged. He was waiting for an appropriation for paint. But you don't really need paint to pull weeds.

They asked me if I wanted to see their prisoner. I said sure. So I looked through the bars of their two-cell jail. An extremely sad looking guy in shorts, badly in need of a haircut, looked back out at me. "*Buenas dias,*" I said, although it didn't look like he'd seen anything like a good day for quite a while.

"FARC?" I asked.

"*Si,*" Prieto replied. This guy had been busted, then turned loose for lack of evidence, then busted again when the prosecutor re-examined the case.

"Damn," I said. "I'd have been long gone after that first bust."

The town of San Pablo gathers to hear the government's anti-coca pitch. Growing legal crops will cut their income by 75 per cent.

Prieto grinned. He led me around through the office, and then we climbed stairs to the top of the building, from which we could see a long way in any direction.

He pointed out the building next door. "It is the mayor's house," he said. By contrast to the police station this building looked impressive, and well cared for. "He seems to be doing all right," I said.

"He is a millionaire," Prieto said contemptuously.

"Well paid for his services, is he?"

"*Si!*" said Prieto. "By everybody."

I was looking at a city of tin-roofed shacks, but the vegetation was lush and beautiful. During the conversation it came out that Prieto had studied for the priesthood. I wondered why he'd decided to become a cop instead.

We climbed back down the ladder to the top floor of the building. He led us to his quarters, a small room containing a bed, a wooden chair and a computer. There was a crucifix on the wall and a guitar case. It was the sparest, saddest room I've ever been in. "You play the guitar?" I asked.

"*Si,*" he said, "You?"

I shook my head. "Always wanted to, but I never learned. What kind of music do you like?"

He opened the case and picked up his guitar. He propped his leg on the bed and started playing intricate and beautiful Spanish guitar runs. He was rusty, but he had the potential to be very good.

This Jungla comando wears kneepads for searching those hard to reach hiding places.

This M60 machinegun was captured from the FARC. The weapon saved the gunner's life, but Ouch!

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Only 3 things matter in a fight — skill, conditioning, and attitude.

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Over the years he's acquired some of the most effective and *intriguing* fighter's conditioning drills you'll find anywhere.

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4) Make Your Opponent's Eyes Water with Eagle Style Crushing Grip Strength.

Eagle Catches a Fish — want powerful hands, toned forearms, and functional, isometric strength? *See p. 60*

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Ken Seto, City Counsel Member
Saitama, Japan

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Crane Stands Still — win bar bets and live an extra twenty years by mastering this one. *See p. 66*

6) There are also sections that specifically teach fighting skill, mental toughness and more.

The Iron Broom — send your opponent flying (this is *not* for "friendly" matches). *See p. 82*

"I've been doing the exercises for only 5 days, and the improvement has been rapid. At first I was only able to hold some positions for about ten seconds or so, but after 5 days I can hold for 20 before I start to shake, 30 before I fall down. And best of all, I lost 12 pounds on the diet in one week."

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Thank you for reading this message.

We left the police headquarters and took his SUV through different parts of the town, down by the river and through neighborhoods. It was a truly awful place.

"I'm transferring to Cartegena Sunday," said Prieto, grinning hugely. "Nine years in the police and this is the worst place I've ever been stationed. I've been here seven months." He was overjoyed to be leaving San Pablo.

We drove back to the school. The meeting was still going on, but I didn't see a need to monitor it. Fredy and I and the cops sat under an open palapa and leaned back in folding chairs. There were already a couple of civilians sitting there, talking. The smokers lit up, and we talked. Prieto got in a conversation with an overweight civilian that seemed to be about hats.

Unprofessional Conduct

After awhile someone brought us a lunch in styrofoam containers. The conversation went like it does when a bunch of guys are sitting around shooting the breeze. Someone asked me what I thought of the Colombian cops. Speaking mostly of the Junglas and the antinaracoticos, I said, "Very professional." I ventured the opinion that my experiences with Mexican cops had not been entirely salubrious. One of the Junglas — in Spanish, but I understood every word he said somehow — said that the worst cops were Venezuelan. He described an incident where a bunch of Venezuelan cops in a gunjeep were just sitting in a road, smoking, joking, and blocking traffic. A civilian tried to ease around them and they just blew him off the road with the machinegun on the jeep.

We all agreed that was unprofessional conduct.

Then someone came and got us. We went back to the soccer field. Lt. Col. Castaneda and Sra. Restropo were making their good-byes. Kids clustered. Old redheaded six-two me, I was more strange than a Martian would have been to these kids, and they gawked like I was one.

Then we jumped on the choppers and flew back to Barrancas, back to government control.

Jim Morris is a former Special Forces officer and longtime SOF contributor. His non-fiction books, War Story, Fighting Men, *and* The Devil's Secret Name *are in print from St. Martin's. His novel,* Above and Beyond *is available from realwarstories.com.*

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SOF PROVING ground

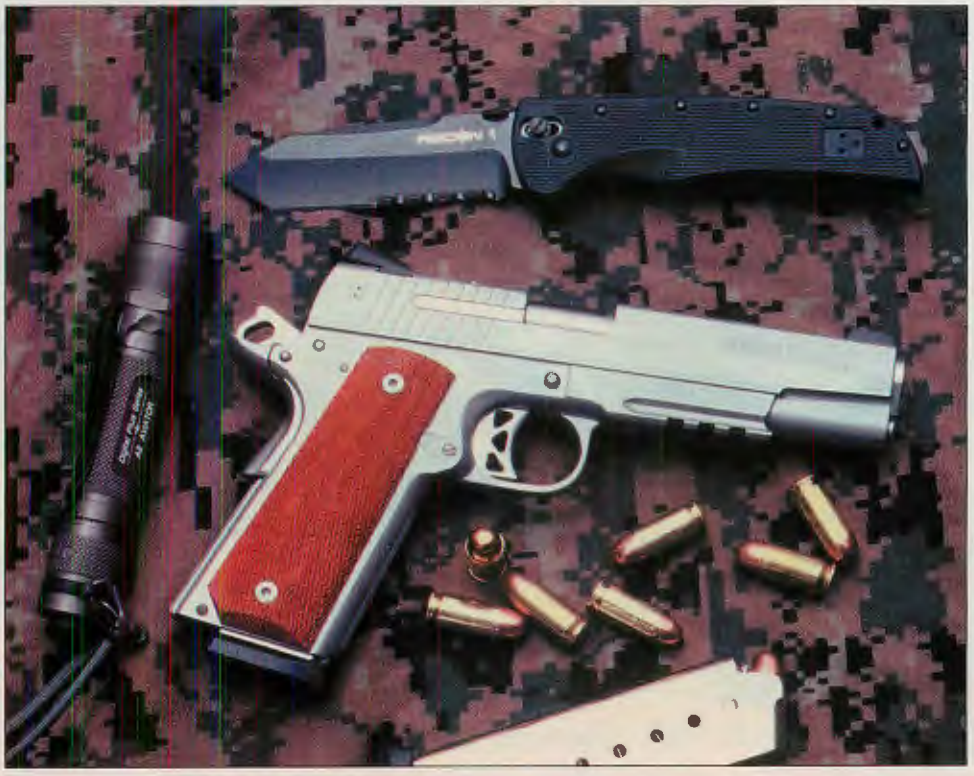
THE SIG GSR:
THEIR 1911-STYLE .45

Will This New Model Of 1911-Style Pistol Prove To Be Like A Rock?

TEXT & PHOTOS BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

In the continuing saga of John M. Browning's most famous invention, there has been and probably will be a literal parade of new renditions of the .45 ACP Model of 1911 pistol. After all, while the best things in life may not always be free, they are always popular.

On the list of some two-dozen makers of 1911 style pistols is one that stands out in more ways than one. Called the GSR, this 1911 is from SIGARMS, and like the recent introduction of 1911 pistols from other major companies, it is quite a departure from SIG's traditional line of pistols. Although the initials, GSR, stand for Granite Series Rail, in honor of the State of New Hampshire (the Granite State), and the fact that the GSR is equipped with a light rail, the model name remains simply GSR.



The GSR stands out in the 1911 lineup, not only because of its SIG heritage, but also because of its quite unconventional appearance. Loosely referred to "pin striping" in the industry, the highly stylized exterior of the GSR leaves no doubt that this 1911 pistol is a SIG. When I refer to the exterior of the GSR I mean the slide, because this is where the GSR's unorthodox features are concentrated.

Instead of having flat even sides, the GSR's slide has a total of five angular surfaces on the left side of its slide and four on the right, and this is not counting the reduced portion of the

SIG's new stainless steel GSR 1911 pistol, seen here with a SureFire digital A2 Aviator light, and Recon 1 Tanto folder. The GSR will likely be the SIG candidate for the USMC MEU (SOC) contract.

Here the GSR has the Insight Technology M3 Tactical Illuminator light mounted. Both it and the SureFire worked perfectly.

Retracting the GSR's slide makes it obvious that there's no full-length guide rod system in this pistol, a good idea in Johnston's opinion.

ACCURACY CHART/.45 ACP CARTRIDGE

	Muzzle Vel.	Small Group	Large Group	Average
Black Hills 230 gr. FMG	853 fps	1.87"	2.18"	2.04"
Cor-Bon 165 gr. PB	1207 fps	2.31"	2.57"	2.46"
Federal 165 gr. Pers Def	1051 fps	1.89"	2.12"	2.02"
Winchester 230 gr. SXT	859 fps	2.19"	2.41"	2.31"
Wolf 230 gr. FMJ	848 fps	2.48"	2.71"	2.63"

Five 5-Shot 25-Yrd Hand-Held Groups Using ProChrono LE. Elev: 7000', Temp: 82*, Humid: 27%

slide near the muzzle. While these cuts serve to slightly lighten the slide, they also give the pistol that SIG look, and they do this helped by the slide retraction grooves that are also SIG-like. A name for the pistol I suggested to SIG over a year ago was the "SIGnature," but I understand this title may be bestowed to a competition version later.

Emanating from a Caspian design, the GSR's slide uses Caspian's exterior extractor and is cut for a trigger-actuated firing pin safety release. Although the ejection port is lowered, it is not flared, because of the external extractor. Pivoting on a pin against pressure from a coil spring in the rear, the extractor claw is flexible and also allows the slide to be closed on a round already in the chamber, with the magazine removed.

Atop the GSR's slide sits a set of Novak LoMount Sights, not some cheap copy, but the real thing with three white dots standard and the front sight not only dovetailed into the slide, but also pinned. These sights present a clear, sharp aiming system while being totally snag-free. A small threaded retainer for the firing pin block is found on the right rear side of the slide where it is semi-permanently installed using a thread-locking compound.

Inside the slide is a stainless-steel, match-grade .45 ACP barrel, slightly enlarged at the muzzle end for a snug fit with the bushing when in battery. The barrel is also lug-locked at the rear for a precision barrel-to-slide-to frame lock-up. The chamber and feed ramp are throated and polished for optimum feeding. That about sums it up for the slide, except for its absence of forward retraction grooves. These would be limited to the lower (wider) portion of the sides of the GSR's slide, but were omitted.

Although these grooves are sometimes used to retract the slide all the way to the rear, their real value is as a substitution for the old "pressure check" to verify that the chamber

Although it was well fit, the GSR was easily field stripped without the need of tools.

SIG GSR SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber:	.45 ACP (others to follow).
Muzzle Velocity:	850 fps.
Operation:	Browning short recoil, single action, semi-automatic.
Barrel Length:	5 inches.
Overall Length:	8.25 inches.
Weight:	39 oz.
Safety:	Thumb safety, firing pin safety and grip safety.
Feed Device:	8-round Novak/ACT Mag.
Sights:	Novak LoMount tritium.
Grips:	Checkered walnut.
Finish:	Matte stainless steel.

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This high quality WellsMade holster is one of the rigs now offered for 1911 pistols with frame rails.

is loaded. To do this the support hand is brought up under the dust cover where the fingers grasp the slide and retract it just enough to partially extract any round in the chamber. This can be seen, or felt with the index finger of the strong hand. A strong support hand can retract the slide in the same manner where such forward grooves are absent.

Also omitted from the GSR's slide group were a full-length recoil spring guide rod and its hollow plug that are so "in" these days. I have often remarked that 1911's with full-length guide rods should come with a hacksaw in order to cut them off, as I see no practical purpose they serve, and I change them out on my 1911's. SIG has wisely taken care of the problem.

While the GSR's frame is more conventional in appearance, it has somewhat of a unique M1913 light rail that is integral with it. Sometimes erroneously called a "Picatinny" rail, the correct designation is M1913 from its U.S. Military type classified number, and the frame rail of the GSR differs from others in that it extends forward slightly. This rail will accept tactical weapon lights such as those from SureFire and Insight Technology.

While early GSR pistols had a Commander-style hammer with a solid center that was checkered, this bit of styling is not present on our sample stainless steel GSR, the hammer of which has a hollow center. The GSR is also available in matte blue. The grip safety is of the "beavertail" type with a raised portion extending down the center of the tang. The thumb safety is both extended and ambidextrous. The mainspring housing is flat and grooved and the magazine well is beveled at the mouth.

The GSR comes with Herrett wood grips that are completely checkered, and these are held in place by hex-head screws. The type of wood used for the grips is unknown, but it is stained a reddish brown color on our sample pistol.

Lights

Testing the GSR's light rail revealed that it accepts tactical weapon lights from both Insight Technology and SureFire. Insight's M3 Illuminator fit perfectly on the rail, as did SureFire's existing and latest X200 with its new locking system. Both of these small lights provided sufficient light to identify targets beyond 25 yards at night. As far as laser sights go, the GSR will also accept the LaserMax laser that replaces the recoil spring group and LaserGrips where the laser is housed on top of the right grip panel.

Speaking of grips, I also tried the new "Gunner" Grips from Simonich, LLC. It's no secret that SIG will submit the GSR in the upcoming USMC MEU (SOC) pistol trials. It's also no secret that the USMC's Det-1 (MCSOCOM) already adopted "Gunner" Grips in Coyote Brown color. These grips fit per-

fectly on the GSR and gave it an entirely new gripping quality. Strider Knives also handle "Gunner" Grips and several of my 1911 pistols now have them.

Holsters

Having a light rail presents somewhat of a problem with holsters, as most conventional rigs will not accept a 1911 with a frame rail. Exceptions are those holsters made especially to accept either type of pistol, such as offered by Rusty Sherrick Sidearmor, Safariland and Blade-Tech, and most holster makers are jumping on the frame rail bandwagon. One of them is WellsMade, of Atlanta, Georgia. Owned and operated by George Wells, this business specializes in exotic leathers such as elephant, stingray, lizard and alligator. Since the GSR is pretty exotic in its own right, I had George make a holster that would accept a frame rail. He made the rig to accept a 1911 frame rail of any length, as it looks much sharper than one for any of the abbreviated rails now in vogue. Made of top grain cowhide, the dark brown, strong-side rig features "Gator Trim," and is of the highest quality.

Shots Fired

Testing the GSR with a variety of .45 ACP ammunition proved it worthy of the company SIGnature on the slide. The pistol digested everything I put through it without a hitch. As far as accuracy was concerned, the GSR printed excellent groups hovering around 2.5 inches at 25 yards. While the factory trigger was good, the one rub with the pistol was that I was unable to depress the grip safety sufficiently when shooting high thumb. This problem is common for me with most 1911 pistols and requires minor fitting to insure that the safety goes off with depressed even slightly.

So what's the future of the GSR? You can bet that other versions of the pistol will follow, such as a target model and one that is more compact. There is also no question that the pistol will be submitted for testing in the MEU (SOC) contracts with the U.S. Marine Corps. Two of the requirements already set by the USMC Det-1 (Novak Sights and a standard recoil spring system) have already been met, and the rest are a cinch. Whatever the case, the GSR is here to stay and should be in full production by the time you read this.

For information, contact SIGARMS, Dept. SOF, 18 Industrial Dr., Exeter, NH 03833; phone: 603-772-2302 (www.sigarms.com).

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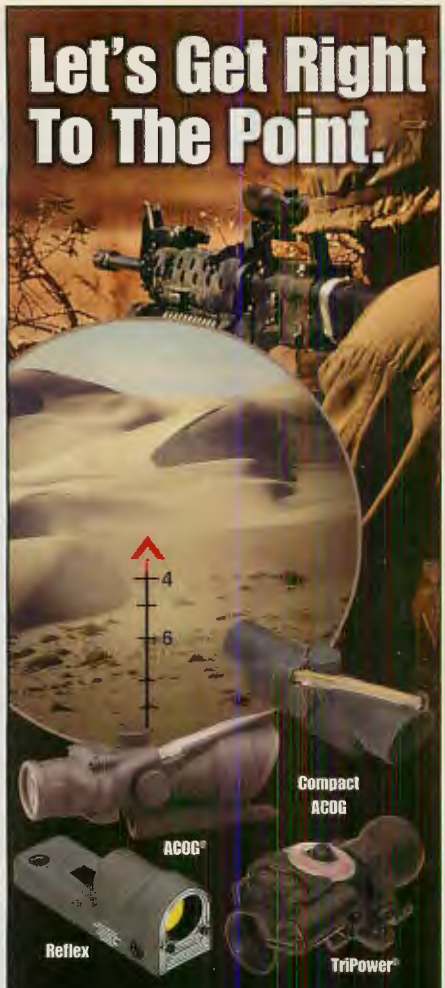

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Crimson Trace has released a new line of Lasergrips that includes the LG-389 model, designed to fit all metal-frame P-series pistols including P-85, 89, 90, 91, 94, and 944.

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Invented by well-know holster designer and shooting instructor Bill Rogers, Buffer Technologies is the sole distributor for what is called Mag-In-A-Box. It is a spring-loaded magazine holder that offers shooters full magazine protection, as well as easy access for quick reloads. Mag-In-A-Box fully encases the magazine so it's totally protected, but when the snap is popped, a spring instantly pushes up the magazine, making it easy to grasp.

The Mag-In-A-Box is made from a high-strength injection-molded polyester elastomer that will offer years of problem-free use. Buffer Technologies offers three sizes of Mag-In-A-Box with each designed for double column-magazines.

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To honor the brave men and women who have put their lives on the line, Corgi Classics has introduced Tactical Strike™ – a series of 1/64 scale models that accurately reflect the conflict taking place right now.

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Mercs Screwed Up, ...

Continued from page 34

shortly after the fiasco.

The plane was surrounded and all men on board were arrested.

Meanwhile, in Malabo, capital of Equatorial Guinea, du Toit sent his men to the airport to pick up the incoming mercs and take them to "strategic" spots in the city.

Du Toit and his team, 15 mercs including Kazakhs, Armenians, and one German, had planned to take over Malabo airport's control tower and establish communications with Mann's incoming aircraft. A former member of South Africa's elite Special Task Forces told *The Star* that he was to secure the control tower and change the frequency to establish communications with the incoming plane.

Afterwards the force would split, with one group kidnapping the government minister, Antonio Javier, who would be forced to lead them into the presidential palace to capture Obiang in his sleep.

Another group was to be driven to Malabo with guides and vehicles. Teams would set up roadblocks to repel military reinforcements.

The attempt "was planned with minimum force to be used, but in the event of resistance, bloodshed was inevitable", Du Toit later confessed.

The militia was ordered to take the minister alive if at all possible, take him to the airport and offer him exile.

Mann and his team would then head to the eastern Congo after picking up the weapons, drop off some of the men and weapons to guard a mine, and wait for word to fly to Malabo to provide security for Dr Moto.

"I just wanted to phone Simon Mann to tell him everything was in order when I got a call from him. He said they were experiencing problems at Harare Airport and that the operation would no longer take place. I immediately phoned my men, who were getting their vehicles in position at the airport and told them the operation had been cancelled. They took the vehicles to our homes and then we all went to bed", *News24* cites the du Toit confession.

"It wasn't a question of taking the life of the head of state, but of spiriting him away, taking him to Spain and forcing him into exile," said Mr. du Toit. *NYT.*

Planning to Flee

At the same time, in Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea, leading members of Obiang's regime who knew of the scheme were planning to flee.

In Spain, security forces were on alert to deploy to Equatorial Guinea to act as security for the new Moto administration after it was installed.

From Madrid, South African pilot Crause Steyl flew Moto, the Equatorial Guinea presidential hopeful, in a chartered King 200 twin turbo prop aircraft, registered ZS-NBJ to Las Palmas in the Canaries.

There, moneybags and co-conspirators Greg Wales and British mining expert David Tremain, who lived in South Africa, joined the presidential hopeful. They nervously awaited the arrival of two government ministers from Equatorial Guinea who were to confirm that there had been a sucessful rebellion against the Obiang dictatorship.

The two ministers never showed up in the Canaries, according to the *Telegraph*. The crew shifted to plan B and flew the "chosen" to Bemako in Mali to meet up with the ministers. The group was to wait for a heads up to fly into Malabo.

The ministers never showed up in Bamako, so the presidential hopeful's

***The suspected mercs were arrested in Zimbabwe on charges of trying to topple the president of Equatorial Guinea. "All 67, men on board, including the crew, had South African passports although many of the men were citizens of other countries. Only twenty are legitimate South African citizens. The group comprised 20 South Africans, 23 Angolans, 18 Namibians, two Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) citizens and one Zimbabwean travelling on a South African passport," a former South African Intelligence officer told* SOF.**

AFP PHOTO / STR

party reluctantly returned to the Canaries where they were informed that Mann and the other alleged mercenaries were in prison in Harare, and that the party of 15 South Africans and Armenians had been arrested in Malabo.

"We realized the plans were stillborn," said a member of the group.

The brief moment of African unity came to a screeching halt.

ZDI boss Col. Tshinga Dube was furious that overzealous intel officials blocked the smooth transfer of the weapons to the aircraft, and informed President Mugabe who ordered the plane to be grounded.

Mugabe apparently got all excited. "When Mugabe learnt that the plane was registered to an American company, he saw it as an opportunity for a propaganda coup ... it was the perfect chance to hit back at the United States" a senior government official told *Zimbabwe News*.

An apparent breakdown in communication among the elite who run Harare airport led to the aircraft being impounded prematurely once an irregularity was found in its manifest, according to the *Daily Telegraph*.

"Re-Impose White Rule"

Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, who accuses Britain of plotting to invade and re-impose white rule, seized on the Guinea coup as proof of his prescience. "This has obviously been a godsend to the regime," said one Harare political analyst, who demanded anonymity.

Sources at the South African embassy in Harare said President Thabo Mbeki was furious and believed "Zimbabwean authorities could have handled the whole thing better," *Zimbabwe News* reports

The Pentagon announced plans for a show of naval strength in the Gulf of Guinea, according to the UK *Times*.

Mugabe put the Zimbabwean army on alert for fear of an attempt to overthrow him.

"A United States of America-registered Boeing 727-100 cargo plane was detained last night at about 1930 hours at Harare International Airport after its owners had made a false declaration of its cargo and crew," *Zimbabwe News* quoted Mohadi as announcing after the arrests.

"The plane was actually carrying 64 suspected mercenaries of various nationalities," he said, adding that an investigation had also revealed "military materiel" in the cargo. The crew had falsely reported seven passengers and said that the plane contained no cargo.

The "military materiel" did not include guns, but consisted of camouflage uniforms, sleeping bags, compasses and wire cutters.

Not a single shot was fired, but accusations and denials still ricochet across the globe

Obiang declared a state of emergency, put his army on high alert, and went on TV to accuse Moto of planning his overthrow.

Mohadi passed the buck. "It has been said in the press that they (the alleged mercenaries) had arranged to buy arms from ZDI but for details on that you can contact ZDI," he said. Persistent efforts to get comment from ZDI failed, as all senior officials were reportedly out of their offices.

On reports that some ZDI officials had been arrested over the arms deal with the mercenaries, Mohadi said: "I can't confirm that. I haven't received any such reports." Defense minister Sydney Sekeramayi also refused to comment on the issue. "The Minister of Home Affairs is handling those mat-

ters," he said.

The Boeing 727, according to Zimbabwe News investigators, was registered to US-based Dodson Aviation, Inc. Dodson Aviation immediately responded that the plane had been sold to Logo Logistics, a private security company, based in the British Virgin Islands.

Who, Us?

"Logo Logistics said that 'contrary to some reports' the people on board the aircraft were in transit to the DRC. They are contracted to provide a range of services to mining clients, including logistics, support services, asset and human security and communications", according to the *Mail and Guardian*.

"We can make it clear that we have no current or intended business in Zimbabwe and certainly no illegal intentions against the government ... the contractors and their families have had an extremely distressing time. It is our intention that they return to their homes for a few days to recuperate before recommencing work".

Acting Attorney-General Bharat Patel said that the suspects would be charged, among other things, with violating the Firearms Act for buying arms without an end-user certificate. He also said they would be charged under the Public Order and Security Act for illegal possession of weaponry.

"Certainly it does raise some questions and it might expose something about the activities of ZDI that the government will regret later," Richard Cornwell of South Africa's Africa Security and Analysis Programme told *Reuters*.

Research Associates' Herman van der Linde said: "There is no way they were going to be able to sell arms to anybody without an end-user certificate, or at least some government backing".

"Please! Our situation is not good and very URGENT," the desperate Simon Mann, pled in a letter written to his wife, which was intercepted by prison guards and quoted in *NYT* and other media.

"It is essential that we get properly organized," he wrote in a letter to his wife intercepted by Zimbabwe authorities before it left the notorious Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison in Harare.

"It may be that getting us out comes down to a large splodge of wonga (money)! Of course investors did not think this would happen. Did I? Do they think they can be part of something like this with only upside potential — no hardship or risk of this going wrong? Anyone and everyone in this is in it — good times or bad. Now it is bad times and everyone has to F****** pull their full weight

"We need heavy influence of the sort that ... Smelly, Scratcher ... David Hart, and it needs to be used heavily and now." South African intel concluded that "Smelly" was Mr. Calil and that "Scratcher" was Sir Mark Thatcher, son of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

"Mann is luckier than the other guys," Col. Des Burman told the *UK Times*. "Those guys will hang. The Zimbabweans will lock up Mann and the others for five or ten years, get as much publicity as they can, then let them go."

"A very serious situation is developing here concerning the seizure of the aircraft and the arrest of alleged mercenaries. They face the death penalty in Zimbabwe or slow death in Zim jails," SOF South African intel sources said.

Next month: The trial.

Dr. Martin Brass is an international lawyer and longtime SOF *contributor.*

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New Frontier

Continued from page 41

South, in Key West, Fla.

The war on drugs is becoming more information-reliant with intelligence passed to Coast Guard units operating in drug transit zones, routes in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific. Units in these high narco-traffic zones rely on intelligence and information obtained by the Drug Enforcement Agency, ICE, FBI and many other government, military and international partners.

Good Intel = Precision Targeting = Unparalleled Success

"The quality of intelligence we are getting just keeps getting better and better. Because of that, we're able to almost exactly pinpoint where smugglers are going," said Capt. Michael Parks, the skipper of the *Gallatin*. Intelligence provided by the FBI played a large part in the *Gallatin* crew scoring seven major cocaine seizures in less than two months, which prevented 29,000 pounds of cocaine from hitting U.S. streets.

As cutters like the *Gallatin* patrol the drug transit zones, the importance of the war on drugs has even been further amplified following the U.S. State Department announcement that many known terrorist cells operating throughout the world rely on the drug trade and drug smuggling to fund their operations.

"In the Western Hemisphere, there is an historic link between various terrorist groups and narcotics trafficking," said Rand Beers, the assistant secretary of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs for the U.S. State department, during testimony before the Senate. "Links between terrorist organizations and drug traffickers take many forms, ranging from facilitation — protection, transportation, and taxation — to direct trafficking by the terrorist organization itself in order to finance its activities."

Coast Guard crews participating in Operation New Frontier have increased assets on the battle's frontline, increased information about the enemy, and increased emphasis on the importance of the mission. This has all led to a young petty officer from the *Gallatin* hand cuffing a suspected smuggler on the deck of a go-fast, and another significant victory for America in the war on drugs.

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Continued from page 10

Sniper Platoon. Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

I can't say it enough. Just about everything in your care packages my Marines used as they came back to the rear for their one day of R & R. My name is GySgt David Rodriquez, I am the Scout Sniper Platoon Sergeant also filling in on a team that is short one Sniper. We have 17 Marines and one Navy Hospital Corpsman in our platoon.

We have eight snipers, eight observers, one lieutenant and one "Doc." We have been fighting in the city of Fallujah, Iraq since November 7th. It's been a rough five weeks for us but we are hanging in there. So far two of our guys are up for Bronze Stars. One of them is our Doc and the other one is one of our snipers. Doc is the only one wounded so far, just some shrapnel to the arm and leg. He is good as new now.

You are probably wondering if we have shot anyone yet. Our platoon has over 30 kills. Our furthest shot was 411 yards and one head shot at 250 yards. Everything else has been either at point-blank range or no more than 100 yards away. Some of us have even got some insurgents with airstikes, tank strikes, and mortars. I have never seen so much violence and destruction but once the firefight stops and we look around to see that everyone is ok we just laugh and move on. We travel in four man teams so when we get some s**t with the insurgents all four of us have to be fearless and cover each others back. The Marine Corps way of course.

All of us in the 1/3 Scout Sniper Platoon say thank you and hope we are continuing the legacy of the Fiercest Fighting Force set by Marines before us. That includes you and the Marines before you from Korea, WWII, and WWI. I will be sending you a platoon picture once we get out of the City and head back to Hawaii.

Semper Fi, Sgt Lafon,

Sincerely,
GySgt David Rodriguez

You're Welcome, We're Sure

Dear People,

Please forward to SFC Johnston my thanks for the info in his article on what to take with you to Iraq. My son is Army, I am retired, and he may go back

to Baghdad, he was already there once, and may re-deploy.

Tell SFC Johnston good luck, and God speed. Thank each and every one for doing their duty. HOOORA!!

Brent

As we go to press, Dillard Johnson and the rest of the 3/7 Cav are on their way to Iraq again. This might not be a very good time to be an insurgent.

Pumped!

Thank you for keeping us pumped. I have been in Iraq (again) since March 2003, please help keep the boys informed. I push you magazines to AAFES wherever I can, but in Northern Iraq it is difficult to receive. On a personal note I would like to know more on the going's on and where and how, as I am about to retire. God bless and thanks for all your contributions to your troops, *hooah!*

MSG & Ranger, U.S. Army,
Mosul, Iraq

We Will!

RKB, Keep up the good work keeping us informed. Having recently retired after 27 years of Police Service and 25 years as a Fire Lieutenant in upstate New York, I can now speak about the wrongs in the world, a lot of which I learned from reading your magazine the last 20-plus years.

S.L.Mahan

Navy Docs

My son, LCDR John Love, was written up in your December issue, "Navy Docs at War," page 60, and I was unable to purchase extra copies. I contacted Kelly at your headquarters and she graciously sent me two extra copies. Please extend my thanks to her. John arrived safely home on September 20 after having spent 12 months in Iraq.

June Glasmeier

We don't just love our troops, we love their Moms as well!

SOF solicits your letters by e-mail: editor@sofmag.com ; snail-mail: 5735 E. Arapahoe, Unit 5A, Boulder, CO 80303; or Fax: 303-444-5617. Lashes, laurels, comments, helpful information, questions are welcome. We may edit for space or clarity.

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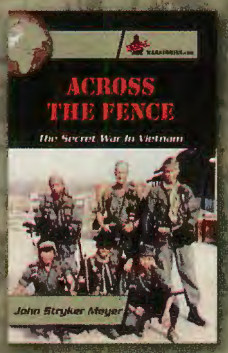

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Bulletin Board

Continued from page 14

favorite myths of gun control extremists," the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms noted.

In its progress report on the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS), the Maryland State Police Forensic Sciences Division recommends that "this program be suspended, a repeal of the collection of cartridge cases from current law be enacted and the Laboratory Technicians associated with the program be transferred to the DNA database unit." So far, Maryland has spent $2.5 million over the past four years, with nothing to show for it. The report admitted, "Guns found to be used in the commission of crime...are not the ones being entered into" the system.

"Our congratulations to Gov. Robert Ehrlich's administration for having released this information," said CCRKBA Executive Director Joe Waldron.

Families Sue Blackwater Over Deaths In Fallujah

Survivors of four Blackwater Security Consulting contractors who were killed and mutilated last year in Iraq have sued the Moyock, NC-based company, saying it cut corners that led to the men's deaths.

The families contend in the state civil lawsuit that the workers were sent into Fallujah, Iraq, without proper equipment and personnel to defend the supply convoy they were guarding.

No specific damages are listed, as is common in North Carolina civil cases. The lawsuit was filed in North Carolina because Blackwater's headquarters are in the state and because, unlike some other states, North Carolina state law allows financial compensation in civil suits for wrongful death.

Blackwater USA was founded in 1996 by Erik D. Prince, a former Navy SEAL. Blackwater has trained more than 50,000 people, including police, military and private security agents.

Sessions Unveils HEROES Act

A bill that would authorize up to $500,000 for military personnel killed in combat, is being introduced by U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) with U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) as a co-sponsor.

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Requirement Of Exemplary Service) Act of 2005 would increase Servicemen's Group Life Insurance maximum benefit to $400,000 from $250,000. Under the proposal, the military would cover the cost of the first $150,000 of insurance for service members once they enter a combat zone. A second provision would require the service member to discuss opting out with a spouse or other beneficiary as is done with the Survivor Benefit Program. The legislation also would raise the death gratuity to $100,000 from $12,420 for military personnel killed in combat. The death gratuity would be retroactive to cover those killed while deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The legislation would index the death gratuity to the rate of annual pay raises and index the life insurance benefit to the annual pay raise. The Defense Department estimated the cost of the legislation at about $460 million the first year, though that figure would be expected to drop in future years by more than half once retroactive benefits are paid.

Update on SA Gun Laws

In a response to a question posed by Abios Khoele, of the South African Black Gunowners Association, as to why wellnigh no applicants are receiving licenses, the Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula, replied, "It is regarded that licenses for firearms should not be granted to private individuals."

Notes John Farnam: What was fraudulently marketed as a benign "licensing" proposal has now shown itself to be a plan (and it was from the beginning) for the elimination of the private ownership of all firearms. The national Safety Minister has sheepishly admitted it. Leftist politicians are all alike, here and there. They brazenly lie in order to trick citizens out of their rights. What individual rights they can't get the public to voluntarily surrender, they snatch away via bureaucratic tyranny. This sleazy treachery is now happening, openly, in SA and in Canada. Democratic (Marxist) politicians want it to happen here. The fact that innocent citizens ("peons") will have no effective means of protecting themselves from violent criminals is of absolutely no concern to these weasely neo-Bolsheviks. Interestingly, they never seem to want the "benefits" of gun control for themselves!

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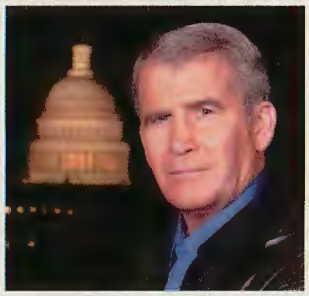
The Other War On Terror

BY LT. COL. OLIVER NORTH, USMC (RET.)



WASHINGTON, D.C. — Sixteen civilians, including women and children, were slaughtered on New Year's Eve. A radio journalist was killed by motorcycle-riding assailants as he drove to work last Tuesday.

A Catholic priest was murdered last month. The head of state has survived dozens of assassination attempts. Scores of locally elected officials, mayors and police officers were killed last year. Death squads are not uncommon. Kidnappings, brutal murders of hostages and attacks on civil infrastructure by well-armed bands of terrorists are part of daily life. Notwithstanding the violence, Bush administration officials say that they are optimistic about the future. Quick! What country is this?

If you guessed Iraq, you lose!

It's Colombia — the other war on terror — the beleaguered democracy less than four hours by air from the United States, that has for more than three years escaped the attention of the so-called mainstream media.

This lack of coverage is significant. Though the axiom, "if it bleeds it leads" prevails in most U.S. reporting from Iraq, the potentates of the press have largely ignored what's been happening in Colombia. Perhaps that's because the real story is so hopeful — leading to a conclusion that patient, persistent U.S. assistance really works. And because that's a lesson applicable to Iraq, it has little appeal to the prognosticators of gloom and doom who occupy our editorial suites.

What the barons of bombast have chosen not to report are the signs of genuine progress being made in ending decades of bloodletting. Members of Colombia's largest terrorist group, the Marxist "Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia" (FARC), perpetrator of the New Year's Eve massacre, are today routinely turned in to the police by a civilian population that once was too intimidated to do so. The equally violent "National Liberation Army" (ELN) now finds its safe havens in the countryside raided regularly by Colombian National Police and Army units.

These terror organizations have long fought each other and the government — financing their operations with drug money, kidnap ransoms and bank robberies. Now, both groups have found a formidable foe in Colombia's current president, Alvaro Uribe. Elected as an independent in 2002, Uribe has taken tough, positive steps toward improving the security and economic situation in Colombia.

Unlike some of his feckless predecessors, Uribe has strengthened U.S.-Colombian anti-narcotics efforts by arresting and extraditing drug-cartel kingpins and sending terror leaders to the United States for trial. His willingness to take advice and assistance from the U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, DEA and military have resulted in dramatic improvements in human rights protections and police and Army effectiveness.

With the aid of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), he has stimulated pepper and vanilla manufacturing centers in places that formerly produced 70 percent of the coca crop — the plant that gives us cocaine. He introduced a plan whereby the youths who are the trigger-pullers in Colombia's narco-terror groups can trade in their guns for an education.

Increased security and industrial development have had the expected positive impact. Since he took office, Uribe has seen his country's economy grow 3 percent in 2003 and just under 4 percent in 2004. The peso has risen dramatically against the dollar. Cocaine production fell by nearly half between 2002 and 2003. Homicides are down 27 percent. Kidnappings have dropped 41 percent. And the right-wing paramilitary group, the "United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia" (AUC), has promised to disarm 800 fighters immediately and completely demobilize by year's end.

A stable, democratic and tranquil Colombia would be proof that American policy can persevere — that if we are patient and persistent we can prevail, perhaps the most crucial factor in Iraq. Baghdad and Bogota have other similarities — both are surrounded by unstable and often unfriendly neighbors. While the Middle East situation is well known to most Americans, the turmoil in Latin America has largely escaped notice.

Former Rep. Cass Ballenger, who just retired from Congress and the chairmanship of the Western Hemisphere panel on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, summed up the situation for me this week: Fidel Castro's best friend, Hugo Chavez, runs an unpredictable, semi-communist government in oil-rich Venezuela. There is new instability in Peru; a weak, crooked government in Ecuador; and financial uncertainty in Panama, Belize, Honduras and Nicaragua. Islamo-fascist terrorists hold sway in the tri-border area of Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina. "With all this," Ballenger said, "a Colombian success story could be the beginning of a new era of American-inspired prosperity and democracy in Latin America."

But Uribe's success isn't a sure thing. New concerns about the Colombian economy have emerged, and a referendum that would have given him more power over the budget was voted down by the people. He also seems too eager to adopt fiscal policies suggested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — taxation and spending programs that frighteningly resemble those that led to the collapse of the Argentine economy in 2001. Such policies could lead to the president's political demise.

If Uribe does fall — either politically or worse, to an assassin's bullet — it would be a great loss. His successor would have large shoes to fill and a hemisphere eager to see if he would be as effective as Uribe in facing down the Marxist terrorists and the drug cartels. Uribe is going to be one of "the best presidents Central and South America have ever seen," Ballenger told me, "if they don't kill him." That, too, is a lesson for Iraq.

To find out more about Oliver North, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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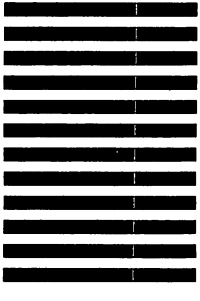

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